AIDS TO CHRISTIAN BELIEF

FRANCIS JOHN McCONNELL

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THE DIVINER IMMANENCE
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FOREWORD

THESE lectures were delivered on the Bennett Foundation of Wesleyan University in May, 1931, and on the Wilkin Foundation at the University of Illinois in February, 1932.

I wish to acknowledge the deep interest manifested in the lectures by President James L. McConaughy, of Wesleyan, and the kindly courtesies shown me by the Rev. Paul Burt, of the Wesley Foundation at the University of Illinois. Both of these leaders of youth did all in their power to get a hearing for what I had to say.

The lectures are five in number. I have added a chapter of Questions and Answers. Many questions were put to me, and of these I have selected a few which for the most part were those asked both at Middletown and Urbana—some in public and some in private.

FRANCIS J. MCCONNELL.

The George Slocum Bennett Foundation of Wesleyan University provides an annual series of lectures by a distinguished speaker "For the Promotion of a Better Understanding of National Problems and of a more Perfect Realization of the Responsibilities of Citizenship."

Upon this Foundation this series of lectures was given by Bishop Francis J. McConnell, April 21-24, 1931.

The Wilkin Lectures under the auspices of the Wesley Foundation at the University of Illinois, made possible by the gift of the late Rev. and Mrs. M. P. Wilkin, of Urbana, Illinois, are designed to bring each year to this student body, through the personality and message of a distinguished spiritual leader, a fuller insight into the meaning and resources of religion for our day.

Upon this Foundation this series of lectures was given by Bishop Francis J. McConnell, February 14-18, 1932.

CHAPTER I

SCALES OF VALUES

THIS book tries to be what it professes to be —a set of aids to the deepening of religious conviction. It does not itself attempt to convert anyone, or to give any one a system of theology. It assumes on the whole a rather friendly attitude on the part of the reader—taking it for granted that the reader is, if not actually a professing Christian, at least disposed to think well of the Christian ideals and practice. Assuming such friendliness, it seeks to point out some ways of thinking which tend to deepen Christian conviction.

When I say "thinking," I do not especially have in mind thought in the narrower, more technical sense. I am aiming at the strengthening of conviction, and that involves not merely philosophic and scientific reasoning but all those life forces which in one way and another play upon a fairly thoughtful mind, or even a mind not so thoughtful. In our living together our minds are not swayed especially by strict logic. Indeed, it is a question

as to how profoundly strict logic moves the world. The logician does his strict thinking in his study, and then comes out to mingle with the others of us, leaving a good deal of his strictness behind. My problem is to look upon the thinking process as an activity of living men, related to all the other processes, and to see, if I can, the types of mind or of mental procedure which tend to deepen Christian conviction.

We begin with the form of mental training which seems most likely to make it possible for men to be friendly to Christian beliefs. We remark at the outset that all mental training aims at giving a thinker some scheme of values by which he consciously—or unconsciously, for that matter—estimates the significance of things and events. Take that materialism which is so much a fact to-day in daily life—the materialism of common experience, let us say, rather than of formal philosophy. I refer to the standards of success of such materialism, with the chief emphasis on wealth, on the power and pleasures which we think of wealth as likely to procure. Some months ago a great American newspaper told the world the real difficulty with the moving-pictures shown by the thousands every night. At

the moment the pictures were being criticized for tending to immorality and the glorification of crime. The editorial pointed out that all immoral and criminal suggestions could be cut out of the screens and that essentially our plight would be as bad as ever. For the picture sets forth a standard of success altogether material—there must be a happy ending, an ending in terms of plenty of money and all that goes with money. A man may protest that he is devoted to the pursuit of the good, the true, and the beautiful and yet his tendency may inevitably swing toward this type of materialism. Training for him would involve the deliberate choice of a different set of scales, and the attempt to order the life in accordance with those scales.

The mention of scales allows our minds to play a little with a suggestive figure of speech. Civilization has at least in part resulted from the use of finer and better scales. We have found how to agree upon standard measures and to compare substances accurately in reference to these standards. Science has gone so far as to make scales of such fineness that they must be placed upon pillars sunk deep into the earth, thus avoiding the superficial jars and tremors of the earth. We cannot work

thus accurately with moral scales, for there is no way of preventing earthy influences from jarring them. Daily materialism gets into all the life around us. The air is full of dust and the dust falls into the scale-pans. The earth is shaken by the tremors of material activities. So that often the best of men, devoted to spiritual ideals high even for a Christian organization, finds instruments which he fondly imagines to be truthful, overweighted by the dust of the air, or shaken by the tremors or quakings, or false because of standing on an uneven surface. So it may come to pass that the standards themselves, even when used by social or political or educational or ecclesiastical institutions, render an unintended verdict for materialism.

Progress in thinking does not always come by tightening up our logical procedure. It comes from bringing out into the light the assumptions on which our thinking moves, or the values which we have taken for granted. Some years ago the universal assumption was that every event in the world around us proceeds according to fixed law. That assumption every physicist carried with him into his laboratory. Everything that suggested freedom was ruled out. Now teachers assure us that

many events take place for which we can find no reason in the antecedents. A force may act in a fashion which suggests indeterminateness, or even caprice. The present-day teacher tells us that this indeterminateness is part of the nature of things, or of forces. The old-time philosopher ruled out caprice because he could not believe that nature could be capricious. His scale of values could not tolerate caprice, or the least slip from iron law.

The lengths to which this passion for one's scheme of values will go are beyond all calculation. For a generation or two scientists looked upon the world much as an overtidy housekeeper would look upon her house. There must be no litter, certainly no dirt. Everything in nature had to be systematically in order. To-day we are forced to admit that the universe is in a mussy condition. We have come to see, as we look at actual human thinking, that more than we imagined, such thinking is controlled by intellectual, or emotional, or practical vested interests. In the political sphere we say that progress comes as we get out into full view the vested economic interests which control nominations and elections and policies of public officials. We do not always object to there being such forces, for we know

that we can not do away with them, but we do wish to get them out into the open where we can see what they are doing. We do not expect that publicity will destroy the alliance between economics and politics, but we do believe that publicity will make for safety in that the alliance must be admitted and, as far as possible, justified. The alliance is most dangerous when it is not faced.

So in the realm of more philosophic theory. Some theories have such hold on the minds of their defenders that they monopolize the entire field of view. The simple consideration that a man teaches mathematics or physics or biology or what we call the humanities will so act on the life of such a teacher as to suggest the power of a vested interest. There is no interest more deeply vested than one in which a man has invested his life. It used to be said that some men could not see spiritual truth because their hearts were given up to evil. This undoubtedly has its measure of justification because an evil purpose, or assumption, or scale of values brings an evil and false result, but such a false, or at least inadequate result, is not the fault of deliberate evil. In all good faith and sincerity a man may use poor scales.

I once knew a psychologist who believed that all mental activities could be accounted for in physical terms, such as the movements in, or changes in, nerve or brain substance. He invented a most cunningly designed set of instruments for the detection and measurement of the changes, many of which put him on the path of worth-while facts. In other respects, however, the machines fell manifestly short, as did the theories which prompted the invention of the instruments. There were discovered mental facts which could not be accounted for on the assumption of physical change, any more than we could account for similarity in ideas from some supposed likeness of the physical movements accompanying the ideas. Confronted by such facts this particular experimenter would not admit the operations of mental activities which are themselves causes and not results of physical processes. He declared that, far from perfect as his demonstrations might be, they were nevertheless on the only path that could lead to truth. Here was an instance of the power of assumption to weight the scales. Bertrand Russell has singled out the will-not-to-believe as a mark of the scientific spirit. It would have to be a hard set of facts indeed that could force them-

selves in convincing fashion on a will-not-to-believe. The will-not-to-believe can make the other scale-pan which holds unwelcome propositions "kick the beam," to use the old expression of weighers. I am not disposed just now to argue in behalf of what we have called miracle, whatever that is; but it would require an incredible amount of evidence to make a strict believer in the realm of law—law being conceived of in the tight terms of, let us say, just ten years ago—accept miracle. He would not argue; he would definitely aver that such things are simply "not done" in a universe of law.

I draw all this out to perhaps disproportionate length because in this day of doubt there is much terror spread abroad by the utterances of philosophic and scientific specialists against religion, and especially against Christianity. We need a training of mind which can enable us to see what scales these specialists are using, and what assumptions they are bringing with them to their reasonings. Balfour once said that all decisive theological and philosophic battles are fought beyond the frontiers of their intellectual provinces. That is to say, the issue is determined in the realm of assumption before we get to the debate.

It is interesting to note that in the acceptance or rejection of scientific theory—and sometimes of scientific fact—the deep cravings of mind for inner satisfaction often play the significant part. Take the Copernican theory, as over against the Ptolemaic. What is the difference between the two theories? The Ptolemaic, in its way, accounted for the facts. It accounted for them so well that it held sway in the intellectual realm for about a thousand years. Why did the Copernican theory supplant it? Largely at first to satisfy the inner demands of thinkers. To begin with, the Copernican statement was in a way nobler. The mind felt expanded, and could breathe more deeply. Of more significance, however, was the passion for simplicity. The Copernican theory was less cumbersome.

For many years I have been a reader of mathematical literature of one sort and another. Two expressions keep constantly recurring which are of interest to a layman like myself, for I lay no claim to mathematical expertness whatsoever. All that I claim is that I like to watch the mathematicians work. I am always an interested, often a thrilled, occasionally an amused, bystander. The two expressions to which I have just referred are

the mathematician's characterization of some mathematical formulas as of great power, and of the same or other formulas as of extreme beauty. Which suggests that in mathematical study the craving for power and the thirst for beauty are not negligible factors. More than that, there are other forces which can hardly be got at in direct statement. A distinguished reviewer of a distinguished author of a distinguished scientific theory has recently confessed to the pressure of secret beliefs in the shaping of his own scientific theory. The reviewer making this confession is one of the hardest-boiled skeptics as to religion we have. I do not mention his name, for I am sure that he would feel that my use of a casual remark —almost a slip, I suspect—would not be altogether fair, as putting more into the remark than the author intended. Nevertheless, the least significance that we can put into the utterance has meaning enough for our present purpose. When all the assumptions that can be definitely stated in science are brought out into the full light, there are still others that cannot be fully stated. They are too elusive. It is the duty of the trained mind, however, to detect assumptions and to remember the possibility of the presence of assumptions that

cannot be detected except by the most precise scrutiny.

May I use another illustration from a different field—that of social theory and practice. A few years ago an official in one of the large watch factories in the United States set himself to discover ways to lighten the nervous strain of some activities in watch-making. As I now recall the incident this official was especially distressed over the nervous wear-and-tear involved in prolonged tests of watch-springs, or, more particularly, hair-springs—tests largely made by keen observation with the natural eye. It is well known that fatigue of the eye through continued strained attention is serious for nerves and for general health. Among other sources of advice this searcher for a better method than eyesight sought the counsel of a famous professor of one of the social sciences in a leading university. The reply of the professor was a gesture of impatience and the words: "Don't bother about such matters. We live in a machine age. If men can't stand the pace set by the use of machines, let them go to the wall." Now, this professor was a good enough man in many ways—in fact, he was a Methodist in regular standing—but in his human

contacts he was a bit thick-skinned, and the thickness of his skin interfered with the fineness of his thinking. In his standards of measurement, what we think of as the human values did not weigh heavily.

In this discussion of scales and values we must insist that we must not fall into the "either-or" or "all-or-none" fallacy, which is peculiarly a fallacy of the untrained mind. It often happens that in dealing with minds which have had no chance at scientific method, or even at thinking at all closely, we have to admit the force of the "either-or" consideration. It is a rule-of-thumb often good enough for practical purposes. In thinking and in moral endeavor it is occasionally well enough to tell men not to adopt some courses at all. The safe rule in dealing with the ordinary man of the street is to tell him never to touch drugs like strychnine or morphine. Yet the use of such drugs under the direction of scientific knowledge may lengthen life.

In the problems of Christian belief, however, there is not much normal to human life that is to be cast aside altogether. It is a question of balance and proportion and perspective. To anticipate by a little I may say that the test which I think of as the best scale

of values for the approach to Christian teaching is that of the human values. I shall try to consider such values somewhat closely later, but I remark here that the very mention of the values throws some minds toward the conclusion that in Christian thinking material considerations are to be thrown out completely. Now, the attempt to ignore matter completely, or as near completely as is possible, is not Christian at all, but pagan. Christianity aims to make the most possible use of matter, so that it has a place in the Christian scheme of things. We confront a question of proportion. Much of the progress of philosophy has come from an adjustment and readjustment of proportions in intellectual considerations to determine the relative importance of various elements. Apart from the progressive discoveries of science the elements on which the human mind has had to work in philosophy have been pretty well known from the days of the Greeks. It is to the glory of the Greeks that they succeeded so well in geting all the factors to be considered in reasoned thinking out into the light. They did not estimate all the elements aright, but they got the conceptions of truth, beauty, and goodness, with multitudinous phases of each, before

men's minds. Almost all the profound questions in philosophy were first asked by the Greeks. Now, progress has consisted in determining the relative values of the realities with which thinking deals. That is what we at bottom mean when we say that there is nothing new in human thinking. We have reference to the fixed elements which constantly recur. We tend to overlook the successive changes in relative significance.

Moreover, we attain to increasing precision. For illustration we may think of that mathematical π which was part of the discomfort-causing mathematics of our schoolboy days. To the Hebrews the ratio of a circumference of a circle to its diameter was as 3 to 1. Now we know that the figure 3 should be 3.1416, and that we can carry it out indefinitely through hundreds of decimals with increasing exactness. Admittedly my illustration is faulty, because we cannot solve human problems with mathematical precision, but in some spheres we do make increasing approximations to the truth, as for example, in our schemes for attaining justice between man and man. Sometimes there is violent shaking of the elements, with the result that factors long obscure come out into prominence, or the

hitherto prominent factors for the time pass into obscure corners. For Christian thinking, however, the aim is always to keep the human values in the first place, with the other values in the other places.

Before coming to closer quarters with this test by reference to human values may I admit that there are those who tell us that "human values" is about the most indefinite term we can fashion, that everybody in these days is working with human values in mind. Even the sensualist can say that in his self-indulgences he is only being human, and he seeks to justify himself on the ground of his humanity. Now and again he speaks of living a rich and full life, and boasts of the range of human experience through which he has traveled. What is the standard of human values and who is to be the judge?

The answer can only be that Christianity conceives of human values as human life at its best and largest. There must necessarily be a drawing of a contrast between the "largest" as the sensualist would interpret largeness, and the "best" as the follower of Christ would think of the best. The search for the sweep of multiform experiences may leave the mind without any power to perceive quality at all.

Suppose such a search to involve sacrifice of regard for the truth for the sake of selfish indulgence. This might involve inability to recognize truth when one might see it, especially when one might violate one's inner sense for truth by self-stultifying justifications of oneself.

There are instances in which one must be the judge of oneself of what the human value calls for. At other times the only safety is the judgment of men of admittedly high ideals, or the attitudes of elevated public sentiment.

There is current just now considerable teaching that in the pursuit of human welfare we are to think only of welfare stated in material terms, with the material good of the greatest number as our aim. We should give ourselves, we are told, to a calculation of what will bring about the best actual consequences. He would be hardy indeed who would deny the soundness of this aim in many realms. The world is physically hungry and always has been. A scheme that would busy itself in increasing the amount of bread in the world for widest possible distribution would justify its promoters and workers for not paying much attention to anything but the making of bread. Suppose, however, the bread-makers

got to thinking of their task in terms of what might accrue to themselves. In such case no harm that could be brought within the scope of calculation might be done. Still there would be a violation of an inner moral feeling in what we call right-minded men that we could not safely ignore.

Consider the hold of Tammany in New York City. That hold cannot be explained solely as the outcome of corruption. The truth is that Tammany does a considerable amount of human good. On the East Side of New York its leaders, or its various minor clubs, will see that the poor have coal in a cold snap, or that the funeral expenses of a member of some family that cannot pay the undertaker will be met. More than that, some of the commoner services, like the supervision of water, will be well looked after. We have to admit that the Tammany government is probably better than that of any group of high-brows and high-hats could be, unless these groups mastered Tammany's art of getting close to the people. The upshot is that the ordinary citizen of New York thinks that on the whole a vast amount of human good is done, and is disposed not to say much when the Tammany leaders line their own pockets with big sums

out of the public purse. As long as no indictable crimes are committed, he does not care. The moral tragedy here is that no attention is paid to the demands of a sense of propriety and of trusteeship in the service of the public —a feeling which to the unsophisticated, normal mind seems worthy indeed. Yet this feeling cannot be brought within the reach of any calculation of results, except as we say that it will be a sad day for any nation when such high feelings vanish from the minds of its citizens.

It appears, then, that important as may be the calculation of results in the estimate of human values, there is something else—the feeling of intangible, imponderable values which are, as far as we can see, the reaction of normal human beings when presented with moral questions. This feeling does not require for its explanation any special faculty in human nature. All we have to say is that human nature is such that, looking at men as they are, they take stands on some problems not merely because of estimates of results, but because of their feeling itself that some courses ought, or ought not to be, approved. The feeling is deeper than any formal reasoning about it.

We may be pardoned for a further illustration. A student of English social conditions was some time ago commenting on the fact that in spite of the flood of radical discussion of sexual and marital relations during the past ten years, not a large proportion of English young people appeared to have accepted the teaching in practice. The discussions, as we all know, had for considerable part taken the direction of insisting that many courses once outlawed by a strict Puritanism could be followed without practical harm and even with much practical good. Nevertheless, the courses had not been adopted by as large numbers as one might have expected. The writer to whom I have referred declared that this lack of adoption of the more radical views revealed the inherent "decency" of the English youth. I know how easy it is to ridicule this judgment. The disappointed advocates of the new theories will, of course, have it that what they are contending against here is a survival of irrational taboos—but that does not tell the whole story. All I am insisting upon now, however, is the presence of this inner element in the judgment of human values.

Taking the Christian point of view as to human welfare, we find the standard to start

from Christ's thought of a man as the son of a Christlike God. From that general considerations follow at once as we unfold a few implications of the idea. Will the reader please understand now that I am not trying to deduce anything by strict logic. I have said that the Christian scale of values is an assumption which we carry with us into our thinking about Christianity. Theology has often made the mistake of trying to deduce a lot of hard-and-fast propositions from bases which are beliefs. Then the whole system seems to possess a logical fixity as firm as the theorems of mathematics. All of which does more harm than good. Religious dogmas remain in the realm of belief throughout. The standards to which I now refer ought to shape our Christian convictions.

First we must adopt Kant's thought of a man as an end-in-himself. He is the bearer of, and sharer in, a humanity which is never to be looked upon as mere stuff, or tool, or instrument. If a man himself chooses to train himself into a fine instrument, he may do so, but such instrumental result must not blind us to the claim of a man to something approaching an absolute right to treatment altogether above what we would give to ma-

chines or animals. Some prophets of a better order of society in the future are sure that one day every man in society will be granted enough material substance to keep him alive whether he is personally of any noteworthy consequence or not, subsistence to which he is entitled, in the doctrine in question, by the fact of his being a member of the human race. There is a degree to which all men are alike claimants for regard—all alike are human. No matter what they may do or not do they are to be treated as men, even if they insist on treating themselves as less than, or other than, human beings.

In addition there are phases of a man as an end-in-himself which are altogether relative, which must be respected. He may be superior to his fellows in some respects or inferior to them, and both superiority and inferiority must somehow be taken into account in that Body of Christ which makes every member equal as being an organ of the Body, and yet different from every other—the differences all indispensable to the Body. What is common-to-all in man is sacred, and what is peculiar to an individual is expected to be sacred.

Next in order in our scale of values come other good things which are likewise often

called ends-in-themselves, but not with as strict right as human beings. I refer to the values stated, since men began to think of such classification at all, as the good, the true and the beautiful. Perhaps it would be better to say that these are the highest forms of reality which minister to the life of men. Here would have to be included all those values which we think of as essential in Christian teaching.

The test of anything which claims to be good or true or beautiful is often declared to be an inherent self-consistency, or conformity to an ideal. This would seem to make these values stand on their own account. After all, though, consistency and conformity are demands of minds and minister to minds. We need have no hesitancy therefore in saying that the Christian views of life and its meaning, of destiny and of God, must meet the test as to how they minister to the largest and finest life for men. There is no truth so sacred as to be exempt from this demand. The one question we must insist upon concerning the Christian viewpoint has to do with the effect on human life and character through accepting that viewpoint. What difference does the acceptance of the view make to the one who accepts?

We must have a care, indeed, as we press this question. It happens that this very inquiry is included in more than one questionnaire having to do with the consequences of Christian belief. The difficulty here is the scientific proneness to estimate consequences in an outward measurable sense, whereas the consequences of accepting the Christian view of life and the world may be in many men almost wholly inner. Observing the lives of multitudes of men, we might not be able to detect much difference in outer conduct through their acceptance of the Christ-spirit. They might act about the same after as before; the difference might be just the difference in spirit in which the actions would be performed.

Here again we have need of keeping in mind the spiritually skillful use of our scales. In a day which lays so much stress as does ours on outward and measurable consequences we should remember that the kingdom of heaven does not wholly consist in the things that we observe. These lectures will have abundant opportunity to speak of the need of a social expression of the Christian truth, but such social expression might have to do more with inner attitudes of mind than with mate-

rial achievements. Suppose we could have a Utopia finally won in the material consequences of man's effort. Suppose that, as far as earthly goods are concerned, every man should have enough for all his essential needs. In a Christian view this would be only a starting point. The Christian view insists that material good give the basis for the ripening of intellectual and æsthetic and moral virtues. In the social relations of such a kingdom there would have to be not merely justice of the kind assured by courts, but justice also of fair thinking. There would needs be kindliness of attitude one toward another, and sincerity in deed and word and thought. Now, for the most part, it might be said that such sincerity, or the lack of it, would inevitably affect the material order, sooner or later, but still there might be shades of moral excellence or default so fine that they could not for a long time register themselves in the social sphere. It would require a delicate moral perception to catch such qualities, and yet their presence or absence might be immeasurably significant to the perception detecting them. Values abide often in overtones and shadings and fragrances.

This may seem like a return to emphasis

on the narrowly individual gospel, so-called, which we have heard so abundantly denounced. It is not intended to be anything of the kind. That individual gospel drew a confining line around a narrow range of personal duties and ignored the vast outside—the realm of social life. The view urged here is that the social application of Christian truth is the widest possible, that the material order is to be worked over in the interest of social good, but that the inner spirit is to embrace all these activities in an attitude of kindly interest and sympathy.

I remember once reading a protest by an embittered cynic against the larger aspects of modern life—against the war tendencies of internationalism, and the competitiveness of industrialism, and the sordidness of much family life. Casting about for some sphere in which worthwhile human qualities can be developed, he found this sphere in the relation of ordinary contacts—greetings upon the street and in the market place—kind words between human beings in the simplest human relationships. He thought the good in the world could be found only in such limited relationships.

In all this cynicism there is a truth. The

good things of this life are of the inner spirit. The trouble with the cynic in question was that he despaired too soon of ever making international and industrial activities fields of kindly contact.

We must always look for the significance of gesture in the relations of man to man. We say that a gesture is nothing in itself. It is not to be compared in practical importance with digging in the earth or hammering at nails. Yet it may mean everything in the happiness of the daily life of an individual, or in the good will between nations. A wave of a hand may not have great economic value and yet it may bring a delight beyond that of a gift of rubies. A salute to a flag may mean a new era in the intercourse between nations. One can well understand the interest of a dramatic critic in watching closely the gestures of great artists, for not only is a gesture at times an act of beauty in itself, but it is a delicate medium of revelation, and as such worthy of the admiration of the acute judges of such instruments of meetings and exchanges between human souls. We say at times that the kingdom of humanity will not fully come until there is more material giving on the part of men toward one another, more ex-

change of goods, since there are not now enough material goods to go around. This is true enough, but it is also true that there are needed mutual signalings of the finer things of the spirit, interchanges that physically mean nothing, but which are weighty with human consequence.

Sir William Hamilton used to say that he desired nothing of those whom he employed to read books aloud to him except that they should merely pronounce the words. He cared nothing for subtleties communicated by speech or gesture, and if he should, he would supply them himself. This might do for Sir William—abstract thinking machine that he was—but the full-lived human being knows that accents and glances and even slight changes of countenance interpret an author's meaning. It is said that Rachel, by many regarded as the greatest mistress of dramatic tragedy the world has ever seen, once worked three days on the utterance of a single line.

What I have been trying to suggest is that in the realm of religious experience there is this loftier range of values which can never be measured, or even expressed in speech. The appreciation of such values has to be experienced to be understood. There are various

types of persons in this world who say little. First, those who have nothing to say; next, those who have so much to say that they hesitate because of the very wealth of their intellectual storehouse; and, finally, those who are silent because they live in the experiences which are of rare and fine quality, too fine to find expression in speech.

I have spoken of the human values, of human beings who are ends-in-themselves, whose largest and best human experience is to be the aim and result of any and all religious effort. For that high result all good things in the world are to be regarded as foods, or instruments. A proof of a pudding is in the eating; a proof of an instrument is its adequacy to the work expected of it. By this test are all Christian institutions to be judged. What happens to the man who holds the belief, or listens to the preaching, or attends the church, or partakes of the sacrament, or keeps the ecclesiastical commandments? Such scales must be held steady as men seek to apply them and they must be handled with all due charity. What are the effects of Christian belief as they are worked out into the large social implications? If Christian beliefs are spiritual food, into what soul stuff are they trans-

formed when they pass into the life of him who consumes them? A journalist once complained of the churches that they did nothing day by day which the newspapers could display as news. Well, the churches, in any event, are supposed to make only the news that is fit to print. They contribute their share to that order of news, but their finer gift to civilization and society is in that nobler realm which calls for the use of scales and standards not likely to be found in any newspaper office no matter how excellent. The development of such scales and of the qualities measured by them is an aid to Christian conviction.

CHAPTER II

THE GROWTH OF IDEAS

In the first chapter I undertook to show that life does not always move along by logical rules, life being more than, or different from logic. Here I wish to say somewhat the same thing in a different fashion, insisting that the growth of ideas, religious ideas included, does not, except in a general way, resemble the workings of strict reason.

I admit that the growth of an idea through a period of years in the life of an individual or a group does move according to an order, but that this order is not necessarily logical. The resemblance is closer to the growth of a natural organism than to the unfolding of a set of mathematical propositions. We often talk about the logical development of a movement, but we do not mean that we are dealing with a rational determinism. In life one step does lead to another, but the effective causes are not wholly of logic. In dealing with criminals we say that once a man starts to lie he has to keep on lying. That may not be be-

cause logic is at work. We may know that a man will have to tell a second lie to escape from the first, but we cannot deduce from the first lie what the second will be. So in the pursuit of the truth. A second perception of truth may follow the first, but the first does not always contain the first within itself even by implication. The discovery of truth is something more than just the manifestation of formal reasons. The illustration of the Master about the contrast in size between the mustard seed and the mustard tree is in place here. The mustard seed does not grow into a tree by sheer expansion of itself, but by laying hold upon elements of soil and air and water and weaving them into itself. The marvel of the seed is the extent to which this can be done. Of course, a mustard seed is itself and nothing else, but it becomes a tree by power of appropriating what it can from its surroundings, and taking into itself materials from the outside. Though it can never become anything but a mustard plant, how much of a plant it will be, and of what quality, depend on the possibility of levying contributions from without. What chemical elements are in a particular soil, what the degree of rainfall may be, what heat or cold the plant may experience—

factors like these, are, admitting at the outset the nature of the seed, decisive.

I once heard a Christian teacher lay down the proposition that when a believer departs from orthodoxy, one can predict the outcome if the believer is logical at all. According to this teacher Christian truths are so bound up together that the denial of one involves sooner or later the unraveling of virtually the whole garment. It is fortunate that Christian truth does have somewhat the nature of a system, but we should be in a bad way if everything were tied up together in any such interlacing as this. Just how progress would be possible on such assumption does not readily appear.

This same teacher used John Henry Newman to illustrate his thesis, declaring that in the *Apologia Pro Sua Vita* one can see from the beginning just where Newman was coming out, though Newman was not himself conscious of what was taking place. This was called the development of the logic of Newman's position. Now, Newman was a fairly orderly mind, and what the teacher in question saw was order and regularity in the movement of that mind. After Newman had taken the steps, it was easy to see how each step followed its predecessor, as the movement of a

sympathetic thinker. There were, however, all varieties of forces playing in Newman's mind, some of them altogether of that personal quality that we do not understand to this day. However, when Newman came to the end and joined the Roman Catholic Church, he came not into complete regularity at all. His final conclusions were never satisfying to Roman Catholic authorities. There was too much of Newman about them.

A close friend of mine, a professor in a theological school, was, years ago, attacked for heresy and forced from his position by the ecclesiastical powers of his church. His critics said that after they had driven him out he would show his mental tendencies more clearly, revealing himself for the heretic that he was. They spoke as if the dangerous conclusions of extreme theological radicalism were lying there coiled up in the professor's mind, the professor harboring them more or less maliciously. As a matter of fact, the professor lived for twenty or more years after his dismissal and taught all the time without developing anything dangerous. Suppose, however, that he had become an extreme skeptic. Note some of the life situations which might have aided such development. Dismissal cut

him off from his more orthodox associates. It would have been only natural if he had resented violently the cruel treatment he had received from the orthodox—and the orthodox can be abominably cruel. All this, and the daily contact with a new group of associates—possibly radical—could have accounted for a development which might have taken place but did not.

Some of this same notion of the driving power of logic appears in the classic adage that the teaching of progressive views to students is most dangerous because the students will carry the logic out more relentlessly than will the professor, since they are freer from restraining influences. This concedes the point I am making, for it admits that with the professor there are restraining influences at work. The students may indeed carry the logic farther, but that is likely to be because they are under the play of different life forces than are their teachers. On the other hand, they may not carry out the logic at all.

There is much in the current teaching of biography that is to be deplored, especially the emphasis on the seaminess in the character described, and in frailties pulled out of all perspective. Still, the personal emphasis has

been needed to offset that stress on the movement of impersonal forces, going forward by a power of fate according to an inherent logic, which made the study of history and of the social sciences so barren and dull till this newer interpretation and method set in.

I do not deny the force of logic, but I would insist that all manner and degree of other forces are to be taken into the account, and that the acceptance of Jesus as leader and Saviour does not necessarily mean that we subscribe to a system, and that the failure to accept this or that detail of a creed does not imply that we are illogical and unreasoning. A fiery theologian in my own church used to insist with mighty eloquence that the battle for the leadership of Jesus had to be fought out over the book of Daniel. Logic is logic—all the Bible, or none, was his claim. The interesting aspect of this good man's argument in those old days was that he had never been markedly logical, or even markedly intellectually consistent himself; but that through a series of grievous personal afflictions he felt his own faith slipping and sought to save himself from calamity by emphasis.

Throughout this chapter I wish to take as guide a classification of mental processes made

by Dr. Graham Wallas in his notable volume on the *Art of Thought*. Doctor Wallas' contention is that vital thinking is much less formal than we have supposed, and that life-considerations of the kind of which I have been speaking reach powerfully into all thinking worthy of the name. He suggests that the thinking processes are four: first, the collection of data by observation or otherwise; second, incubation, during which the mind broods over the material; third, illumination, when a truth is quickly, possibly instantaneously, seen by the mind; fourth, verification, when the truth thus arrived at is subjected to test. In my discussion I use only the Wallas outline, illustrating the processes with my own material. Doctor Wallas was not aiming, as I am, to set forth helps to religious thinking.

The first step is the collection of data. In the problem before us are the opening of the mind to religious ideas, whatever they may be, the teachings of Scripture, the experience of prayer, the influence of religion on the lives of individuals or groups, church activities—anything, in a word, which bears upon a religious problem, the whole to be received with as open a mind as possible.

In thinking about religion, as about any-

thing else, there has to be some measure of deliberate selection. In the inimitable parable of the different kinds of soil Jesus tells of minds that are packed down hard, like a roadway, through the pressing of the footsteps of too many experiences. In the interpretation of his parable in Luke Jesus speaks of those who in an honest heart receive the truth, the honesty consisting in giving the truth a chance. Seed is given a chance when it is sown in a fenced field, or at least in land which is not likely to be perpetually trampled on.

One difficulty in the attempt to get a hearing for the gospel to-day is not that the minds of the hearers are not open, but that they are too much open. Everything can dash in—and dash out. Very few persons to-day are deliberately hostile to religion. Very few would say outright that they do not have time for religion. They welcome the truth gladly enough, but the life of the time is so multifarious that swarms of ideas come tumbling over the fences into the field which we had thought to set aside for the gospel. Thus the birds get the most of the seed. I do not see at the present time how we are to win a hearing for the gospel except through the purpo-

sive setting apart of time practically every day —if only a few minutes a day—for its study.

Many a faithful teacher nowadays seeks to meet the need here by condensing his ideas into brief statements, marvels of compression, which reveal intellectual force of high order. Yet it is the condensed statement that requires the most time for its comprehension. Much of the current-day compression of religious truth into brief compass makes our problem worse. There are some time-saving methods which are indeed highly rational, at first glance, but which are less effective practically than former-day methods which seemed cumbersome. The secret of the worth of the more cumbersome methods was that they necessarily took more time—and time was the essential.

At the risk of seeming hopelessly belated and reactionary in pedagogic method let me say that in learning a foreign language I have always got on better when I have looked up the words in a dictionary than when I have at hand a list of words and definitions prepared with the passage before me in mind. I do not know that there is anything about the mere turning of the pages in a lexicon or a dictionary to find the meaning of a word that

helps the mind; but, speaking only for myself, I know that the keeping of the word in mind while hunting for its meaning, and trying to decide which of the meanings given in the dictionary is the true one, helps me to remember the word. With prepared word-lists I find that the words do not stick. So with the too-condensed utterances about the gospel. They are intended to save time. In reality they are often deceptive, making us think them simpler than they are, and less important than they are.

We come to Wallas' second point—*incubation*. The figure of speech is most suggestive. The first chapter of Genesis tells us that at the beginning of the creative process the Spirit of the Lord brooded over the world, as if order and system came out of the warm protection like that which a mother bird spreads over her nest. Or, to keep to the figure of the seed, the process of growing an idea is like that which marks the growing of a seed. The soil tears the seed into shreds to let the earth forces get at it.

I do not think that we do wisely in allowing learners to think that the growth of Christian ideas is an easy, comfortable, and painless process. An idea may seem to a believer's

mind to be gloriously clear at first glance, only to pass into anything but clearness on the way to its final revelation of itself. The discontent and distress of thinking upon religious ideas may be a mere indication that the true processes are at work.

Let us look at some of the marks of thinking as it passes through the period of incubation. The psychologist tells us how much thinking is done in the region of the subconscious. I do not know that anybody can define just what subconscious thinking is, but we all know what we mean by the term. A minister gets a text for a sermon and holds that text before his mind for a few minutes every day long before he begins to set pen to paper. He finds the text recurring to him with new shades of meaning, without his having deliberately noted these new shades in his conscious thinking. The text draws illustrative material around itself. The preacher, without attempting to force anything, allows the idea to sink repeatedly into that subconscious realm till it seems to be soaked with the undercurrent of his very life.

Now, much of the content of the subconscious life has been thus first in the conscious thought. It is transformed in the subconscious

realm. So that a necessary step in religious thinking is to get an idea definitely before the mind, and then let the mind work around it easily. In reading a serious book it is occasionally well to stop as soon as one comes to a sentence one does not fully understand, and leave the sentence till a later time—time not specified. The meaning may dawn at a later day, not because the mind is fresher, but because in one way or another it has been at work.

We are told to keep our hearts with all diligence, for out of them are the issues of life. The psychologists of the current hour tell us a good deal about the significance of day-dreaming, revery-thinking, which is not as purposeful as wide-awake thinking and not as unwilled as dreaming in sleep. In the day-dream the mind wanders freely—but not quite. There is an element of choice even here. Anybody who has done any daydreaming at all knows that there is such choice. Some picturings are called back repeatedly. A religious idea ought to be interesting enough and attractive enough to find its way now and again into the content of revery.

I once had a friend who, when he found it difficult to get to sleep, gave himself to revery,

that by its uncontrolled wandering the mind might finally fall away into real dreaming. He admitted that he had to give this up because the pictures on which his mind dwelt were not often of high order, but took on a too earthly, not to say sensual, cast. Oddly enough, just at the time I heard this statement another friend told me that in his youth he had committed to memory a number of poems of marked beauty of suggestiveness and that when he could not sleep, he found his mind moving easily and freely among the pictures which the poems suggested. Even revery can be brought into subjection to a high purpose.

Admitting that a deal of significant thinking goes on in the realm below full consciousness, I am not sure that we get much light on the growth of religious ideas from modern psychoanalysis; but there are some general considerations which may be of value. First, let me say that psychoanalysis has not yet in practice been very well represented by its votaries. Half-baked students have tried their hands at psychoanalytic methods without any background of general intelligence whatever, without a furnishing of good sense which must condition all scientific effort. I have known a young man of this stripe to insist on digging

up things out of the past in dealing with a married couple which ought to have been left covered, and who succeeded in nothing but wrecking a home. The human mind is an amazingly delicate organism.

Moreover, psychoanalysis oversimplifies the human problem. It was unfortunate that Freud tried to make the sex function account for so much. To be sure, he used sex terms in a more inclusive sense than customary in ordinary speech, but his followers have too often employed the terms with their ordinary suggestiveness, which has resulted in confusion and worse. Again, the teaching has professed determinism outright, and that too in gratuitous and rather futile fashion, for no man makes more use of exhortation of the kind implying freedom than the psychoanalytic determinist. Once more, the psychoanalyst violates repeatedly his own principle of the unity of the individual by talking of the psychological forces as if they went along impersonally by themselves. These forces are in themselves nothing but abstractions from the mind's ways of acting. The psychologist sometimes talks as if there were an inevitability about the effect of the forces on the mind. This is only the voicing of an enthusiasm for

a science still in its infancy. Many repressions lead to nothing. Some of the forces which the psychoanalyst thinks of as so irresistible are like the torpedoes which sank to the ocean bottom in the World War without exploding—and will never explode. After a time psychoanalysis, chastened by criticism, will fall into its proper place in the scheme of the sciences, and the place will probably not be as large as the enthusiasts predict.

To come back to the general considerations of more worth. The whole of present-day psychiatric method aims at an honest facing of reality. The method will have it that if we dig deep enough into ourselves and then face what we find, we shall get relief, perhaps, from this or that complex and from nameless haunting fears. This method too has its limitations. For many years I had a fascinated horror of the sea. I heard a psychologist say that in such a horror one should search for the cause, look at it boldly, and the horror would vanish. My trouble was that I knew precisely the cause of the difficulty, and the more directly I looked at it the more horrible it was. I was traveling off the coast of Hayti years ago when an acquaintance, foolishly perching himself on the rail of the ship, lost his balance

and fell over into shark-infested waters. The accident occurred in the dead of night and there was no hope. Facing that cause of the horror of the sea did no good. The sharpness of the shock to me had to be taken off by the passage of time. So that this direct gaze at the sources of complexes has its limitations, as has any form of introspection. Still, the frank facing of a situation enjoined by modern psychiatric methods is in line with the honesty required in all religious thinking.

Especially is this true when we have a tendency to "rationalize" our experiences into something quite different from what they fundamentally are. We assume an attitude, or start upon a movement, which may have quite other grounds and reasons than those which we are willing openly to assign. I do not mean that this process is insincere. It may be almost irresistibly inevitable. All the more reason, then, why we should be as careful as we can, especially when an idea is in the period of incubation, to see that reasons are genuine.

I was once consulted in a pastoral capacity by a young woman who said that she was suffering from doubt as to the existence of God. She felt that she had become an atheist. This

was on Tuesday afternoon at about four o'clock. Inasmuch as the young lady had been at church on the Sunday evening previous, and had to all appearances been in the full enjoyment of theistic faith, her statement on Tuesday afternoon as to her atheism seemed remarkable, not to say startling. Asked for reasons for the change she tried to talk a little philosophy, but that was not very successful. Then she said her trouble was not so much with theology as with the manifest inadequacies and failures of organized Christianity. She did not do as much with this as I felt she could have done. Then she said that the difficulty was with Christian leadership, especially with the shortcomings of the so-called "pillars" of the church. Finally, she got everything narrowed down to one pillar, that pillar being her own father. He was the source of her distress.

By this time we were indeed down to business, and a little questioning brought out the facts: The young lady was engaged to a most estimable young man. After the Sunday-night service the family of the young lady—including the young man, sat at her home and talked politics; a heated campaign was then "on." The father-in-law-to-be and the pros-

pective son-in-law were on opposite political sides, and became first earnest, and then heated, and then enraged. As an upshot it looked as if the engagement would break up. Now, both men were fundamentally sensible, even though they were for the moment making fools of themselves. It required only a little pastoral skill to get the disagreement straightened out. Practically instantaneously the young lady got back her faith in the pillar, in the pillars, in the leadership of the church, in organized Christianity, in theism. She was safe in the sound theological fold by dinnertime on Wednesday. Altogether, it was as fast and quick a trip out from theism to atheism and back again as one is likely to encounter.

Some features of this incident are to be noted. The young woman was entirely sincere in her notion that she had become an atheist, and yet her reasonings had not the slightest connection with the state in which she found herself. A vast volume of utterance and thinking by human beings is likewise symptomatic. The reasons given do not rest on reason, but come out of other forces whose presence they reveal.

Even if we cannot detect in ourselves this rationalizing tendency, it is always well to

remember that it is likely to be at work, and at work with power. One may turn away from some emotional crisis, it may be, and expect to forget it all in close thinking. One may not be aware that a discerning onlooker is likely to see that the emotional waves break over into the reasoning. We need always to remind ourselves, especially when we are engaged in thinking on religious themes, that we do not fully know ourselves. We think we know why we think as we do, namely, because of the reasons we assign. The real "why" may have nothing to do with reason. We might get help by following John Ruskin's advice and sitting down to put on paper a list of our qualities and tendencies, but even then we should probably miss everything important.

I have lingered long on this period of incubation because it is in that period that so much human thinking takes on its vitally human quality. Was it not William James who said that our thinking is steeped in the juices of the emotions? Some try to squeeze out all their emotional juice to get at pure thoughts, only to discover that they have squeezed out all that gives their thought its higher value.

Doctor Wallas' next step is *illumination.*

This refers to the quick flash of understanding that follows the prolonged incubation. The emergence of anything into its last stage of ripeness is likely to be relatively sudden. The chick breaks through the shell, the flower blooms out overnight, the wheat changes to the deepest shade of gold in a day or two, the color stands forth on the fruit as if it had come in response to a wave of the orchard-tender's hand. In the thinking of individuals and groups there are the seasons of quick flowering out. The thinker may brood long on a problem and finally give up almost in despair, to discover the solution flashing upon him in the twinkling of an eye, under the most untoward circumstances. This is the significance of the story of Newton's falling apple. Incidents no more significant than the fall of an apple have released intellectual forces, long brooded over, into meaning and order. Another historic incident is the sudden forming of the natural-selection theory in the mind of Darwin as he browsed through Malthus on the *Theory of Population.*

The practical question is to teach thinkers that incubation is likely to be followed by illumination and thus to deliver them from anything like an anxious and strained feeling

of futility. One cannot tell how near one may be to the flashing of the light, though in some spheres, as in routine sermon-writing, the intellectual organism can be trained to pass through its stages almost according to schedule. For the most part, however, we have to ponder and reflect, and reflect and ponder, waiting for the light to break.

The other practical consideration is equally important, namely, that the illumination which is of consequence is not at all likely to appear without the preceding incubation. A thinker who has been blessed by quick flashes of insight must never fancy that the flashes have come just of themselves. They are the outgrowth of the previous activity, of the yeasty disordered ferment of the mind as it picks ideas to pieces. The seed wheat never literally reappears. It is gone, after the juices of the soil have had their chance at it. The farmer will never actually see again the wheat which he casts upon the earth under the autumn sky. That wheat will be torn into patches and threads on its way to another form of reappearance. Except that we can preserve ideas in writing we might also say that we shall never see again some ideas after we have begun to yield them up to intellec-

tual incubation. The idea of God which the thinker casts upon the soil of his mind may emerge transformed beyond all recognition.

We pause for a little to look at the last division of the Wallas idea, that of *verification.* In the religious life this means the application of life-tests, the most important being one's power to subsist upon the discovered truth, to use it as if it were a tool, to eat it as if it were food, to breathe it as if it were air.

It may be well to look at this process of verification in a somewhat negative fashion, glancing at reasons why we should not reject some statements of religious truth which have come out of the inner brooding of Christian believers. First of all, we need to think carefully about the charge that the relativity of religious convictions mars their effectiveness for general use. It is admittedly true that every religious conception is relative to the mind that holds it or utters it. We say that a man must make his religious convictions his own, but after we say this we must be on our guard lest we conclude that these convictions are not applicable to any other mind. Relativity is not to be carried quite as far as that. One individual may be at opposite poles from another individual, so that there can be only

remote possibility of communication between them. They may use the same words with entirely different meanings. Yet the types of human beings are comparatively few. No two human faces are exactly alike, but we know a human face when we see it. Here we come upon a practical paradox. Assuming that a human life is not pathological or over-eccentric, the more that life reveals its inner secrets the more others find an answering echo in their own inner consciousness. Matthew Arnold sang finely of the unplumbed, salt, estranging sea that marks us off into loneliness of separate personal lives. Well, these intimate self-revelations are attempts to plumb the depths; and sometimes they do reach far down to those firm foundations which make the separate islands possible. A diary of inner experiences intended for no eye but the writer's own is often of immense value to those other eyes that do see a diary. Take the rascally but inimitable Pepys, whose journal is such an invaluable picture of life in England in the days of Charles the Second. The journal is more than that—it is the revelation of the working of a human mind, whose temptations were grosser, perhaps, than those of most mortals, but the form of whose tempta-

tions, and the vigor with which Pepys reproached himself and excused himself and condemned himself, make the chronicle an inimitable story of the commoner human strengths and weaknesses. So with the narratives of inner religious experiences. The more they seem relative to the writer the more they hit upon the common-to-all in the believer's quests for truth.

Again, a religious utterance is not to be passed by because it has not worked free from much that is merely incidental. Some minds have no power whatever of threshing the wheat from the chaff. They do not always seem to know what is wheat and what is chaff. So that utterances which contain within them the heart of the truth come to us surrounded by something at the moment irrelevant, and even harmful. It is interesting to note how the greatest minds have now and again failed to work loose from nonsense in the course of studies of the profoundest nature. Berkeley gave the world the most effective statement of idealism we have had, and yet Berkeley was obsessed with the notion that tar-water is a sovereign remedy for all human ills, and he could not keep the tar-water out of his philosophy. Perhaps it would be better to say

that he could not keep his philosophy out of his tar-water, for it is in the discussion of tar-water that he makes some of his most cogent statements of philosophy. Again, Sir Isaac Newton gave the world the binomial theorem, and the calculus and the three laws of motion, and the statement of gravitation, but he was probably himself more interested in the discussion of the book of Revelation than in anything mathematical. Fortunately, Newton kept his biblical studies and his mathematical studies separate, and the world lets them remain permanently apart. We have all heard religious teachers attempt to bolster up truth which could stand alone by some theory of literal biblical inspiration. By the way, that theory is entitled to great respect for services rendered. If it had not been that there was a time when the Scriptures were looked upon as literally inspired, the editorial treatment and mistreatment of them would have been immeasurably worse. At one time the theory helped preserve the Scriptures.

Once more it will not do to disparage utterances, or to say that they fail to deserve mental assent, when they seem at variance with or in open contradiction to one another. It is a peculiarity of living thinking that it is full of

formal contradictions. The contradictions have to be solved in life. One age-old philosophical puzzle is that of the one and the many, perhaps insoluble except in terms of a consciousness that knows itself as at the same time one and diverse. The problem of the reconciliation of the sovereignty of God and the freedom of man cannot be solved except in living—men knowing themselves to be most free at the moment they recognize most completely the divine sovereignty. The mind, however, finds it difficult to rest in unstable equilibrium and so it swings from one phase to another of these contradictions. Or, to use another figure, it is easier to walk than to stand still, and walking does get us ahead.

We can go farther and say that truth is truth in that it is religious nourishment even when it comes as utterances from persons whose characters, and not merely their minds, are contradictory and inconsistent. All that inconsistency of character normally means is that the character is incompletely ruled by religious impulse. It does not by any means involve insincerity and hypocrisy. Religious convictions uttered by a hypocrite would be dubious indeed, but inconsistency is not insincerity. The growing religious consciousness

utters convictions as it moves along, without waiting for full maturity. It is well for us that this is so. If we had to wait for knowledge of religious experience and statement of conviction till the spokesmen had attained to entire religious ripeness, we should wait a long time.

I knew a master of chorus singing who could do more to get an entire congregation of hundreds to sing together than any other leader I have ever known. There was a maelstromic quality to his voice which swept all neighboring voices around its vortex. Moreover, this man had what some other such leaders do not always possess, namely, a feeling for religious values in the selection of hymns and of timeliness in their use. Of genuine religious impulse and training, he had other qualities not altogether sanctified—a rough manner of breaking into a religious theme with a common sense altogether too secular. So that some said they got nothing of religious uplift from his musical leadership because of the juxtaposition of fine sentiment and rough, not to say coarse, abruptness. One day the inconsistent director came to me and told me that the Lord had directed him in mystic vision to go to Japan and sing the

story of the gospel. It appeared that the Lord had promised that the melody would convert the Japanese without their knowing the words and that money for the journey would be forthcoming. To my too prosaic question as to when the start was to be made, my friend broke at once into reproaches, because I could think that at the age of sixty-two he would go forth on such a foolhardy expedition!

This was characteristic, so characteristic that many good people refused the inspiration of a remarkable leadership in song. The man was sincere, and his music did not suffer from his inconsistency.

In discussing religious authority we shall have occasion to speak of character as a sanction for the worth of religious ideas. Just, however, as it is the duty of a religious community to preach the gospel as widely as possible before it has itself at all thoroughly mastered that gospel, so it is the duty of individuals to utter religious ideas before their own lives show forth the full ripeness of experience. In other words, in the Christian realm we seek to find our way along, helping one another as best we may. Religious thought may point out directions before it can put the directions into final statement.

CHAPTER III

SOCIAL STIMULUS

THE social influences which play upon the development of Christian conviction are like the atmosphere around us—so much taken for granted that to many they do not seem to call for special attention. The antithesis of a few years ago between the individual gospel and the social gospel, or, rather, the opposition to the social gospel—all this has largely lost its force. There is no society apart from the individuals that compose it, and the individuals are nothing, or but little, apart from society. There never has been an individual existing wholly by himself. Individuals may for a time withdraw from society, but they cannot get away from the influence of the group out of which they withdraw. The biblical narrative of the creation of man starts man into existence with at least one other human being as his companion, and represents the institution as divine that deals with the relation of at least two persons. The definition of religion that makes religion an

affair of man's solitariness is not wholly adequate, chiefly because man's solitariness is so inconsiderable. Even in solitariness a man thinks in words which are social creations, and uses thought-tools which he himself has done little or nothing to create. If for any reason he should desire to count up the things or events of his daily existence, he would have to fall back upon a counting scheme and arithmetic symbols devised by generations of thinkers. We are all tied to one another by the strongest and the subtlest of bands. If we leave out of our religious thinking all this social influence, we do not have much left. It is odd, then, that there should have been such an outcry against the application of the gospel to the influences of society upon the members of society.

A good deal of the opposition was a protest against the impersonalism of some of the social preaching. The advocates of the social gospel often talked as if men were swayed by impersonal powers like institutions. In religion questions of conscience necessarily play a large part, and moral praise and blame seem to involve personal implications altogether lacking to impersonal institutions. The preacher of the social gospel seemed to be

emptying all the personal values out of religion and to be leaving the field to economic and social laws. Inasmuch as the teaching of Jesus was predominantly personal the new emphasis seemed to have replaced the gospel with another gospel which was not the gospel.

There was indeed some attempt to right things by the doctrine, taken from a political leader, that "all guilt is personal," that men do feel the force of social influences but that these influences are set at work by a man or by men from whose conduct they stream forth. Run down a social law, the word went, and you find a man or a set of men at the concealed end of it. The law was an instrument in the hands of men.

The truth in this nobody can deny. Widespread social movements are often in the hands of individual manipulators. Still, the manipulations could not get far if they did not in some degree meet a human need or arouse a response from human minds. Barring the men who somehow get control over masses of men by seizing monopolies of this or that material wealth, the men at the end of the economic laws are at least tacitly counting on the support or the acquiescence of the multitudes. The guilt has to be more widely

distributed. Impersonal laws cannot be guilty, and the individual persons are given too much credit when all the guilt is laid upon their shoulders. The masses of people must share the blame or the credit. Now, this does not distribute guilt or praise so thinly as to make it amount to nothing in the case of a particular individual. Any citizen owes certain duties to his community. He is remiss if he does not fulfill them. In the material realm, like taxation, the community sees that he does fulfill the duties. A citizen is at least under obligation to think and speak as soundly as he can on social concerns for the sake of shaping that public opinion which is the fundamental force in such matters. This is all the more important from the fact that individual men act differently in groups, or as members of a group, from the way they act when taken separately.

We all know that we unfold new or unsuspected powers in ourselves when we make new human contacts. There are some persons who draw out the best in us. When we are with them we feel the stirrings of good impulses which we do not feel apart from them. We might never have felt such stirrings if we had not met the individuals who called them

forth. Marriage causes unsuspected strength, or weakness, to reveal itself, as does joining one of the minor social groups. The consciousness of belonging to a nation has notably the power to call into manifestation in the individual forces whose presence he did not suspect. Now, whatever the group that calls forth any response at all, that group is a revealer and developer of personality in the individual life. On this meager statement of the situation, then, it is evident that the social powers are a proper field for religious cultivation and control. An individual may be entirely worthy in his accustomed round of personal duties and entirely unworthy when under the power of social opinion, just as an individual of no consequence in himself, it maybe, is lifted to a height of noble heroism when roused by the call of this group.

Let us look at one or two instances of this social power—at like-mindedness, or the condition when the thinking of multitudes of men gets to running in the same direction at the same time. We have only to recall our war memories to see how utterly irresistible such like-mindedness is when it is once thoroughly aroused. On the one hand it exalted hosts with a consciousness of what seemed the nobil-

ity of a world-wide crusade, and on the other hand it aroused some of the basest passions in men. I once saw a popular jubilation in Mexico City on the supposedly wonderful adjustment of a revolutionary crisis following a ten-day battle—the famous *decena tragica*, in 1913, in which six thousand persons lost their lives. The city went wild, and yet not too wild to march in fairly orderly procession. The excitement was with some merely that relief from long tension which leads to incoherent gestures and ejaculations. Bands were playing but they could not be heard at a distance of fifty feet, because of the tumult and uproar. There were many faces which showed signs of high patriotic uplift, faces of men who were manifestly willing to go to death for a cause. There were others who could evidently think of nothing except setting fire to the newspaper establishments of their opponents. There were probably hundreds of individuals who would never be the same after joining that parade, some who would look back to an ecstatic exaltation, and some who would find it hard to forget baseness to which they had given themselves.

A hint of the possibilities in Christian social co-operation can be seen if we look at wide-

spread sympathy in a community at a time of calamity, let us say. How does it happen that, after a desperate calamity like a battle, or an earthquake and fire, in which thousands lose their lives, the total of suffering of the survivors does not seem as immense as if the friends of the dead experienced their sorrow in small groups separately? The answer is that the sorrow of each in the common calamity spreads out over the entire community in a co-operative sympathy. The uplift from the gloom is easier when all are suffering together.

Speaking of the problem of death, some of its sting could be removed if we could so order society or re-create its institutions as: first, to lengthen life by more hygienic measures and the reduction of the possibility of accident; second, by co-operative social support of those bereft of bread-winners; third, by more widely spread sympathy with those suffering the deeper spiritual losses of separation from loved ones.

The chief harm which the social outlook does the faith of the believer is in the contradiction which it presents, when we take the world over, to the preaching of the gospel of a Christlike God. There are those who tell us that the gospel is good enough for a restricted

view of life—a view of life which we could best call sheltered, but when we lift our eyes to the teeming masses of actual society, and group the whole world in our field of view, we do not cease to respect Christianity, but we do cease to think of it as adequate. So the charge runs.

There are many features of modern society —some in Christian society, so-called—which are manifestly in flat contradiction to the teaching of Jesus. We have no need to speak of war, which is flat and blatant atheism outright. The competitive system is almost equally contradictory to Christian principles.

It is true that society is doing more and more to set limits upon competition so as to preserve essentially human values. It is forbidding what might be called hitting below the belt. There is also an element of impersonalism in business competition which takes away much of the sting of defeat. Nevertheless, competition is a contradiction to Christianity when the stakes are too great, and they are too great when failure in the economic race means possible starvation. If the field of industry is to be always a competitive fight, we might at least try to rise to the level of the prize fight and demand that the loser re-

ceive a share of the profits of the fight. The defender of modern competition always will have it that we need competition for the productive values. Admittedly there is something wrong with the modern distributive processes, but the present capitalist system is credited with being the most effective producer.

We cannot deal with a claim like this unless we are willing to face all the facts. Among these facts are the costs, and among the costs are the human costs. Any social institution has to be held accountable for its human waste heap. I knew a school which prided itself on its record of having in ten years sent back home as failures over four hundred boys. The subsequent records of these four hundred boys revealed many first-class minds among them. The truth about the school which had made a supposedly glorious record was that it judged a student by his success in passing examinations. A boy who has successfully passed such a test may have revealed nothing about his mental ability except that he has ability to pass an examination. Now the industrial waste-heap may mean nothing except that the cast-asides are not successful in doing this or that specific task. Anyhow, a

system which conducts a race so swift that runners can keep their pace only through a few years when they are at their physically best, and who keep to that pace chiefly because of their fear of losing out altogether, is in contradiction to those genuinely human demands which are of the essence of the gospel. The deadliness of failure through the haunting fear of failure, is not the stimulus which fits into a Christian scheme. Any system founded largely on fear is not likely to be Christian. The fears of man are not the beginning of industrial wisdom.

Of course, it is claimed for fear that it brings out the powers of men to the utmost, but that is doubtful at the best and at the worst reduces men to something below the human state. The story goes that a Haytian king once forced slaves to carry a slab of stone up a mountainside by shooting every one that showed signs of faltering. In wartime commanders have been known to order that those hesitating in approach to the enemy's line should be shot, but no battle situation can be pronounced human anyhow. Now, it is not much more human to make men feel that they will never get rid of the haunting sense of fear in their daily work. The only Chris-

tian solution to the problem, or approach to a solution, is co-operation.

A manufacturer once took violent exception to a remark of mine in behalf of allowing workers to get together for the protection of one another against the injustices of employers. Later in the same evening this same man described with smug self-satisfaction the extent of co-operation among manufacturers in his line of industry, co-operation which protected the manufacturer against the lowering of the prices of goods and against the raising of wages. That is to say, the employer was willing to rule out competition among manufacturers altogether, while working the principle to the full among laborers competing for jobs. I am not now concerned to discuss remedial measures, but I do say that the whole of the present-day organization by which men earn their daily bread has only in spots attained to anything like a Christian principle. Men have often attained to a measure of Christian spirit in their individual lives only to find that after they have finished their morning prayers and crossed the threshold of the place of business, they must violate that second commandment of regard to one's fellows, which is like unto the regard for God enjoined in the first.

When we lift our eyes to nations beyond our own, especially to the nations of the Orient, the contradiction between the value of men as taught in the gospel and the cheapness of human life is another appalling fact. Probably it is just to say that the majority of persons who have thus far lain down to rest at night since human history began have done so without having known through the day the satisfaction of enough to eat. The majority of men who have thus far lived have not had the material means of a properly human existence.

By this time someone breaks out with the cry that there is no use of trying to do anything about all this. The best we can do is to retreat behind our doors and stop our ears, shut out the world, and give ourselves to the study of whatever pleases us and let it go at that. Let us pluck whatever values we can from the passing years and forget the world. What does it all amount to anyway? The future is as dark as the past. The physical universe began in mist, and may, for all we know, end in cinders or in ice. Even if we built up an ideal human state, it could not last forever. Civilization will cease after a time because the life-giving forces of nature will die out. The

race will grow old as the individual grows old and will finally sink out of existence. Why all this anxiety to redeem society to a state that cannot last? Why all this mind-ache and heartache? The individualist is right who tells us to seek the salvation of our souls, and to quit thinking of society.

All this seems formidable and compelling, but let us cast about a little before we allow the contradiction to drive us to such hopeless despair. Suppose the race on earth does perish. That is no more than the individuals do one by one, as far as earthly existence is concerned. However, we are not set upon establishing an everlasting social state on earth just as a state. If the doctrine of immortality means anything, the social state we might begin here would be indeed nothing but a beginning, a sort of trying-out place. All we are aiming to do is to deal justly by human values wherever we can reach them. These values are the ends—in themselves. No one man can help all other men as individuals. If he tried to do this, his personal sympathy would all be drained out. Every man, however, can so live and act that the welfare of the Great Society of all men will be the aim of his effort at least as the background of his thought, so that

his goal is the setting on high of human values.

There are those to-day who try to lighten our problems for us by saying that we need not take our own truth so seriously, that the so-called non-Christian nations have their own views of life and the world. Why should we try to give them a Christian view? If we could get rid of anxiety for all creation, we might do more in the world by cutting our garment according to our cloth. The quality of our effort might thus be better.

It is the question of the human value again, of helping men to make the most of themselves as men. We have indeed come to see that many of the former contacts with non-Christian nations have been wrong. The so-called forward nations have tried force on the so-called backward nations, all for the good of the backward. That is a failure. They have tried other forms of compulsion—all failures. We have most of us come to see that whatever of Christian truth non-Christian nations appropriate they will have to take for themselves. We can invite them to the table of our truth but they will have to do the eating.

Now, the critic of this Christian effort to do something for the whole world is likely to admit that he does not disapprove of prac-

tical efforts like those which lead to better health of body and mind. Such an admission carries us a long distance, for in these non-Christian lands the non-Christian world-view is tied up with practical consequences. I once passed three nights in an Indian village where cholera was raging. I could turn my head in one direction and see a house out of which three dead were carried in a single morning during my stay there. All night long the people were beating drums to drive off the cholera demons. Note, now, the belief in cholera demons is part of the theology of the dwellers in that village. The common advice is that the people should be taught scientific method—as, indeed, they should; but scientific method is an attack on their theology. Why not leave the natives in that village to their own theology? Leave them, indeed, if it means that we must otherwise seek to put a view upon them by force, but why not adopt the sensible course of trying a change of theology, at least to the extent of teaching them to help one another in the spirit of Christianity?

I am not now disposed to make a point of labels, but I am convinced that such change of thinking in lands like India and China as will

make better health conditions, to say nothing of better educational conditions, will never come about except as those nations can see the action of a genuinely Christian spirit working out into expression in service. If we drop all considerations except those having to do with the welfare of Indians and Chinese we shall have to introduce the Christian set of human values, and that involves not necessarily this or that personal ecclesiastical creed, but a transformed view of the world and of the power back of the world. The first necessity is to get masses of mankind to take a larger and finer attitude toward men.

It will appear, I fear, to many that the social stimulus is the stimulus of an almost impossible task. In the next chapter we shall look at more definite challenges to the Christian spirit. Here we turn to look at some minor criticisms of the social influences, minor but nevertheless perplexing to many of us.

We look around to-day and find ourselves in a fearful welter because so many inhibitions have been removed from human speech, especially since the World War, and there results an almost overwhelming confusion of voices. We almost wish the performance of Babel could be achieved and some of the speech con-

fined to various circles by depriving men of the power to make themselves heard by everybody. What is the voice of society to-day except a multitudinous, multifarious jumble of tongues talking of all themes, many of which we had in previous generations agreed not to talk about? Everything seems to have broken loose into speech. Probably more people are as a result in distressing perplexity just now than ever before in the world's history.

I do not think this profusion of utterance is a reason for deep distress. All that is now being said has been thought times enough before. The floods of speech to which we are listening are more a nuisance than a peril. Moreover, they are relieving the minds from which they issue forth. A lot of this is self-expression. It will not quite do to say that there is no need of talking of self-expression until there is a self to express, for we enlarge self by self-expression. Was it not Bellamy who wrote a book about a psychic island, the peculiarity of the island being that the inhabitants had no need of speech because they could see directly into one another's minds? I should not care to live on such an island, because I should not care to be always looking at mental landscapes of little significance.

The worst type of advocate of free speech is the man who insists that his freedom of speech implies a compulsion on one to listen. We can permit freedom of speech only on condition that the others of us reserve the right not to listen.

Still, it is just as well that so many things are being said about religion. We are now witnessing the first large-scale scouring religion has had for many a year. The little criticisms have their value in the sum total. The talk means that religion is alive, and that it is enough alive to be vitally talked about. What religion is always in need of is the washing off of accretions that are not results of a life-process but of sedimentary or parasitic forces. Some of these dubious additions fall off just because they are so profusely talked about. They get talked away. The elements that can survive the attack—and more often the defense—are those worth while. Moreover, by the sheer law of probability it is likely that, with so much being said, some occasional good things will be said, and we need all the ideas we can get. It is to be remembered that William James once appeared before the Massachusetts Legislature to protest against a bill which would forbid

the practices of various eccentric medical sects. James admitted the dangers in the practices, but insisted that we simply must not block any channel by which a truth may possibly find entrance in modern life. We cannot tell in religion any more than anywhere else when and where a truth is likely to appear. As long as we are having to do merely with discussion we may as well let the discussion go on.

A good deal of the discussion is "symptomatic," to use again a term I employed in the last chapter. The utterances are not themselves especially worth while as to their content, but they are significant for what they reveal as to the times through which we are passing. The criticisms of religion may not be worth anything at all, but they reveal that the critics do not like the forms of religions that are being presented to them, and that they are enough interested to voice criticism. Presumably they would care for religion if it were presented in some other form. This calls for careful study all around. It may be that the fault is wholly that of the critic, but it is the duty of Christianity to deal with human faults. It is not altogether justifiable to say that the Christian religion is something that

men can take or leave. There is truth in this declaration, but not enough to justify us in indifference as to whether men take religion or not. A rigorous and vigorous leader of orthodoxy once reproached me for what he called too large accommodation to the religious demands of the time. He told me to come down to his church which I should find to be a strong fortress of orthodoxy, the old gospel flag flying all the time. I went down. The church was in the midst of a thickly populated section of our largest city. The pews were elegantly comfortable and the singing all that could be desired. There was the fortress, but it was empty. Men had been told that they could take the presentation of the truth or leave it—and they left it. The preacher could not be altogether acquitted of blame. If this were a matter of a few individuals here and there, we might well say, "Take it or leave it." It is more than that, having to do at times with the attitudes of vast groups like the labor circles. It will not even do for us to take lightly the criticisms of some rather flippant writers who to-day in books and magazines make their flings at Christianity. Not many of these quips are dazzlingly brilliant and some of them have the bank account as

their aim. How is it, however, that all this sells so well? The answer that the heart of man is naturally evil does not help us much. The answer is too easy.

It may be that the recognition of social attitudes toward religion savors too much of yielding to styles in religious thinking. We may just as well admit the power of fashion in religious thinking, as in all other phases. Nobody knows just who starts fashions in clothes or in thoughts, but the fashions are here. As far as thought is concerned, fashions often determine what men shall think they see as facts. To take a simple illustration, I remember that my grandfather, a member of a pioneer family that came into Ohio from what was then Virginia in the early days of the nineteenth century, used to tell me about a hoop snake which filled the early-day travelers through the woods with dread. It appeared to my grandfather that the hoop snake had the power of taking its tail between its fangs, stiffening itself into a hoop, rolling after a man, letting go just so as to strike the man and killing him instantly with the poison-covered tip of the tail. Even as a boy I never took this story as anything more than my grandfather's attempt to be enter-

taining. Just a few years ago, however, I came upon an old source-book in pioneer history—Tome's well-known *Thirty Years a Hunter*. In between some marvelously accurate bits of description of pioneer life was this same hoop-snake story about as my grandfather used to tell it. Then I realized that neither my grandfather nor Tome was intentionally romancing. It was the fashion in pioneer days to believe such stories. The pioneers were in some realms remarkably accurate observers and in others the slaves of credulity.

We need, of course, to be on guard against fashions as the hoop-snake story teaches, but we need not miss their social and religious significance. The best time to make the most of a belief may be while it is at the height of the intellectual fashion. The more people are thinking about a subject at a given period the more ideas get abroad about that subject at that time. We have to master ideas through steeping ourselves in the atmosphere congenial to these ideas. It is an oft-observed law of the mind that the best moment for the mastery of an idea is the moment when the interest is keenest. Likewise the moment when a social group is stirred with interest in an idea is

the moment when the individual can most quickly and thoroughly master the idea.

There are some services rendered by the larger social groups of which we do not often take account. We may think of the way such a group leaves an individual free to work out his own destiny. The charge is often brought against city life that that life is lonely, with a loneliness more lonely than that of a solitary place in a desert. This is true, and means utter misery to the soul of many a dweller in a city. On the other hand, such loneliness gives some minds their chance. They feel that no one is interfering with them, that nobody will blame them. Some of us desire to have other human beings around us, near enough to feel the presence of beings like ourselves, but we do not wish them to be seeking to control our lives or even to ask questions. Professor Edward A. Ross has said that he never feels his mind working better than when he is walking the streets of a city surrounded by crowds not a person of which he knows. If the definition of religion as having chiefly to do with one's solitariness is true, then the large social groups are entitled to some credit for producing the type of solitariness which throws one most truly upon oneself.

Again, the group living under modern closeness is likely to make the condition for a fresh social start which the followers of Christianity now and again desperately need. The small group is likely never to forget the past of one of its members. In the larger groups there is no time to dig into the past of many people. Men are valued chiefly for what they can do to-day or to-morrow. The gospel is full of the possibility of a man's breaking with his past. A man may, indeed, never break with it himself, because of the power of his own memory, but knowing all the circumstances of his life he may legitimately make allowances for himself that may enable him to keep his own self-respect—provided that he escapes from the play of a condemnatory public opinion. The group too large to bother about the past life of its members may supply a chance for a new start in an individual life, a chance altogether necessary if the conditions of new birth are to be adequately met.

In earlier paragraphs we looked at the social groups as adding to our distress because of the many contradictions they present to the essentials of the gospel. It is possible, however, to look forward to a time when the contemplation of the procession of humanity into

life, and through it, and out, will be reckoned as one of the most inspiring conceptions which can fill the mind of man. If the world can be so organized as to give any man a human chance, or if we can take the gospel seriously enough to believe in an immortality where every man gets his chance, then the age-long procession becomes more impressive than the wanderings of the stars. The immense hosts passing through the portals of this earthly existence and out again, make an appeal to the imagination as exalted as the contemplation of distances, before which the mind breaks down.

A discerning essayist has recently suggested that whereas modern astronomy has ousted man from his central place in the universe, modern biology has brought him back. The old astronomy before Copernicus made man's royalty appear through his living on an earth around which everything else in the heavens turned. That notion had to be given up. Of late years, however, the biological sciences have become certain that, as far as we know, the earth is the only place where man ever could have been brought to existence. This gives the earth a worthier pre-eminence than that of a mere spatial point around which

other bodies were supposed to turn. Those other bodies are no longer conceived of as moving around the earth, but, on the other hand, they are not conceived of as meaning as much as the earth. The fact that the earth alone has produced man has given back to the earth a larger and finer superiority. The earth may indeed be off on one side of the cosmic highways, but that means that those highways do not reach the place of main importance. All of which has stimulating value at least from the point of view of imagination.

It remains to say a word about the function of organized Christianity in relation to the large social questions. I have had occasion elsewhere to make repeated reference to a recent treatment of the *Essentials of Democracy,* by Principal A. D. Lindsay, of Oxford, Master of Balliol. Doctor Lindsay establishes the point that Western democracies, like those of the English-speaking world, are so large that they cannot find their way about, or along to larger social welfare without guidance; and yet that no individual, or small set of individuals can supply the guidance. We must turn, therefore, to groups of voluntarily united persons of like-mindedness in the problems of social advance.

The like-mindedness of such groups gives them mighty power. With members scattered through the main body of the democracy they leaven the mass. Among such bodies Doctor Lindsay listed trade unions and scientific societies and churches. Of course, this doctrine will never suit those who think of a church as merely a loose assemblage of worshiping individuals, or those who will not provide any bond for union among churches. For those, however, who put any meaning at all into Paul's word about the body of Christ the teaching of Doctor Lindsay makes appeal. The official utterances of churches in social questions may become prophetic.

More than that, the churches themselves become, or should become, communities of persons seeking to incarnate in a social organism the truth of Christ and of God. The church has always taught that the revelation of truth is by incarnation. The final incarnation is that in the social organism which reveals the Christ-spirit—groups of men who in their relation one to another, as well as in their own personal issues and lives, seize the truth of Christ and set it forth. This conception gives needed bulk, and size, to the Christian revelation.

CHAPTER IV

THE ACCEPTANCE OF CHALLENGE

It is a commonplace in religious thinking that there is no formal proof of the ideas which lie at the base of the Christian view of the world. More is made of this admission than the admission itself warrants, for no living thinking relies much on formal proof. If the reader wishes a taste of how remote this type of reasoning seems from life, let him go through some such treatise as Bradley's *Appearance and Reality,* an admittedly great book, but one which gives no impression whatsoever of any contact with pulsing, breathing life.

The dynamic thinking of the world is that which seeks to make adjustments, adjustment to the affairs of practical life, to one's neighbors, to oneself, to the universe. There is a pushing something about living. We cannot stop to debate too long. We have to make choices and take sides. We think things to conclusions only in that we reach points beyond which we will not go, chiefly because of

weariness, perhaps, and because also life is too short. If we refuse to make choice, that itself is a choice, for the course of events hurries us along. There is no standing still. If it were possible to prove the existence of God, we probably should not have time to follow the proof thoroughly to the end. Instead we put the question and take a vote.

Of course there are those who think they can prove the existence of God. The possibility of our minds' reading off any meaning from the universe is an indication that the universe is founded in thought. The best argument lies somewhere in this direction, but it will not convince anyone who is determined not to be convinced. It is always possible to file at least one more objection. Even if we can prove that there is a God, we have not gone a long distance, for the important question for the Christian is as to the moral character of God. Does Christianity give a revelation of the moral character of God as like unto Christ? For proof of this character we shall require a different order of qualities in our thinking from the purely intellectual. The moral character of God would have to be taken on trust. The most Christlike deeds on the part of God could always be subjected to

differing moral interpretations even if we agreed upon the deeds as coming from God.

There are theists to-day who too easily hail modern physics as making belief in God less of a strain than of old. It is admittedly a triumph to get away from the old doctrine of matter as atomic, the atoms being little hard lumps beyond which we could not pass in our thinking. We now conceive of an atom as a system of whirling forces, a miniature solar system with negatively charged electrons revolving around a positively charged electron which is the center of each system. This delivers us from inertness and deadness and opens a door for acceptance of spiritual forces. It does not tell us anything about the moral quality of the forces however. The tightness of the old ideas of law seems also to be giving way to something more flexible, an element of indeterminism appearing in events which robs the physical law of that hard-and-fastness which once nearly ruled mind out of the universe. Nevertheless, it is difficult to say yet just how much of a help this new indeterminism is. We can see that the physical universe is much more loosely strung together than men would have allowed even ten years ago, but we can hardly claim that we have

any new light on the moral character of God. To be sure, there is a type of theism to-day which lumps together all our personal and social ideals and calls the sum God, but that type reduces the problem to child's play. What we want to know is whether God is in any correct understanding of the term, personal, even admitting vast distances between human and divine personality, and whether he can be conceived of as a moral Being.

To those who are affrighted at this admission of assumption in the realm of religious thinking we would commend the exercise of speculating as to how any thinking involving discussion could go forward except on the assumption (1) of a community of persons (2) of a common ground on which they can meet (3) of the trustworthiness of reason. Let one try to prove in strict logical fashion that any of this rests on anything else than assumption, and report when one's demonstration satisfies oneself.

It may not be quite fair, however, to urge these assumptions which we take so much for granted that they seem like part of the natural furnishings of our minds. We openly admit, therefore, that assumption plays a part in Christian thinking quite different from the

above—and that it cannot be done away with by any increase of knowledge in the future. For Christian assumptions have to do with moral character. It is altogether conceivable that mystic contemplation might bring a soul into such communion with the Divine as to make the goodness of the Divine self-evidencing, but underneath that approach would be fundamental assumption, and the interpretation of the experience might not be at all satisfactory to an outsider or a bystander. We have only to see the wide variety in the interpretation of the characters the world calls great to realize how much the judgment depends upon the assumptions with which the student approaches the character. The objective human deeds are agreed upon; the interpretations as to moral intent may be far apart.

The tests which we apply to Christian belief are numerous. Lest I seem to have disparaged the intellectual element in religious experience let me say that there are certain common-sense considerations which religious thinking must observe. It would be the height of folly to hold to a conclusion which the most honest scientific observation would hold absurd, or to refuse to take advantage of any

facts or methods which the scientific method places at our hands. So far as science is concerned the battle with religion has to do, as has already been said, with the realm of the assumption. Science as a working tool is never more useful than when handled with a Christian spirit. When working practically the scientists need not bother with back-lying assumptions. The scientist can talk of a universe without God, and of psychology without a soul, if all he means is that he is studying processes without regard to who or what is the agent back of them. The danger to the scientist is that, though not needing to reflect upon the character of God or the nature of the soul for the carrying on of his actual experiments, he may forget both so completely as to be found avowing that science teaches that they do not exist.

The tests involve consequences which may be perhaps summed up in one word about the emphasis on the human values. Do the beliefs we call Christian make for the development of life in its normal possibilities both in the narrower individual and wider social relationships? The inner consequences are if anything more important than the outer, except in the sphere of human contacts. Above

all we ask if the whole-hearted love for God leads to whole-hearted regard for one's fellow man.

One form the Christian challenge takes is in calling on men to follow the Christ-ideal out of devotion to the ideal itself, without regard to material consequences. Only those belong to the kingdom of Christ who desire above all things to be in that kingdom, and who cherish the values of the Kingdom for the sake of those values themselves. Suppose we could have to-night a miraculous revelation of an eternal bliss which may be conceived of as in a material way rewarding the righteous, and at the same time a revelation of material consequences of a distressing order following the rejection of the Christian ideal. There would probably be forthwith a sweeping influx into the heavenly kingdom, or at least a movement toward it.

We know that men do good things with mixed motives and that the aim of moral training is to make the good motives predominate. Those who might supposedly rush toward the Kingdom in our fancied picture would sooner or later find themselves drifting outside. Suppose we could for an instant give rein to the imaginations of boyhood days, and finding

ourselves in a literal new Jerusalem of the kind once held before our expectation, should come upon some man who might ask us how to get out of the heavenly precincts. All we could conclude would be that anyone who wanted to get outside of the Kingdom belonged outside and should be allowed to depart forthwith.

If this seems like a hard saying, let us remind ourselves that we are claiming for the moral ideals of Christianity only the same uncompromising demands that we exact of men in the kingdoms of learning and of art. Granted that a scholar or an artist desires legitimately enough of this world's goods to allow him to carry forward his scholarly or artistic pursuits, we should say that the primary devotion of both should be to the ideals of the kingdom of learning or of art. One might choose to seek knowledge or artistic skill just for the sake of making money, in which case one would have to surrender title to high citizenship in the kingdom of knowledge or art. Jesus did, indeed, promise men that in the kingdom of heaven they might expect material goods, but he thought of these goods as following naturally upon the pursuit of righteousness for its own sake.

Now we come upon a difficulty. There are abroad in the world to-day many, many men who are devoted to Christian ideals in themselves. They ask no reward for their devotion. They do not call themselves Christians, and are even willing to allow themselves to be called ugly theological names, while they go calmly ahead with their devotion to ideals, Christians in all but name. What can we say of these but that in spirit they are of the Kingdom of heaven? What else could Jesus say of them?

The most memorable moment to me in the Lausanne Conference on Faith and Order in 1927 came at the close of a speech by a delegate who sought to define with exclusive strictness the Church of God. Whereupon the late Bishop Charles Gore, whose strictness as a churchman no one could well doubt, spoke a word of caution, reminding the churchmen that there are throughout the world many holders of the Christ-ideal for its own surpassing worth who do not name the name of Christ and who may think of themselves as agnostics or even as atheists. Bishop Gore avowed that all such belong in any invisible church worth thinking about at all. Whereupon, again, another brother, of smaller caliber than the

Bishop, admitted that all this was undoubtedly true, but that it was very dangerous to speak thus. What both speakers accepted as sound, by the way, revealed the long strides taken by religious thinking in the past quarter century.

Both speakers were right. We can with difficulty conceive of a moral intelligence that would close the doors of any kingdom of God worth having to sincere followers of the Christ-ideal, but there are some conceptions of life and the world which follow so directly from the acceptance of the Christ-ideal that we do well to go slowly in cutting loose from them. Henry Ward Beecher was supposed to have made an excellent hit when he declared that the Christ-ideal was the oyster and theology the oyster-shell. It seemed that Beecher was not in favor of eating oyster-shells. Which was not as bright as Beecher usually was. Nobody was asking him to eat oyster-shells. Oyster-shells do have a place, however, in protecting oysters, even as the chaff which Jesus sought to purge from his truth had had a place in protecting the truth. Much of this present-day loyalty which holds to the Christ-ideal as to human values and contacts, while rejecting God and immortality, misses the point.

The aim of theists is not to find a guarantor of any blessedness which would pay them for their theism, but to make the most of human life. Very few think to-day of the richness of the life of the Divine in terms of those "houses and lands" of which the Sunday schools used to sing. The richness of the Divine is a richness of moral character. Just what there is essentially selfish in seeking communion with such a character is a puzzle. So with immortality, the desire for which is often condemned by some followers of high ideals as selfish. The desire may be unselfish, consisting in a yearning for continued pursuit of goodness and truth and beauty on their own account, together with an eagerness to help others in like pursuits. Moreover, the faith in God may be a mark of the adventurous mind that would make the Christian ideals themselves the chart to the interpretation of the universe, or at least a key to rich human meanings, if complete interpretation is out of the question.

Here we come upon one of the mighty challenges to Christian faith—the challenge of its attitude toward the universe. There are different forms of adjustment to the material universe in which we live. There is the adjustment of the practical materialist, because the

thinking, or philosophical, materialist does so much thinking that we can hardly call him a materialist at all. Unintentionally he is dealing with spiritual forces. The real materialist makes a material adjustment to the world. He eats and drinks and sleeps and thinks in terms of material success. The individuality gets flattened out of him. Jesus had no war to make on rich men as such, but it is notable that he did not speak of them as if they possessed much distinctivenes of character. We have to invent a name for the rich man in the parable of Lazarus, and so we call him Dives. Jesus merely called him a certain rich man, as he did also the other rich man who would tear down his barns and build greater, except that he called this latter man a fool. An adjustment is possible to material standards so that the adjusted life becomes material. It sinks into the material surroundings and disappears. Material comfort, the easy-going standards of material success, the dying out—no doubt painlessly—of all higher interests. Sunk without trace—not a ripple left. Just a phase of the material.

Another type refuses to make adjustment. There is, if anything, protest against this world. There are poets and philosophers and

seers who refuse to make adjustment. Everything jars on them. "Nature, red in tooth and claw with ravine," shrieks in their ears against any creed whatsoever. Tennyson tells us of that faith which lives in honest doubt. What that evidently means is that the acceptance of some creeds is immoral. Many of us would sooner believe nothing at all than to believe the older doctrines of Calvinism, for example, as to the arbitrariness of divine sovereignty. If God were really of this extreme Calvinistic type, it would be much more moral to follow the advice of one of Job's comforters and curse him and die, than to surrender to him.

There is to-day much of this rebellious attitude against the universe, and much of it has back of it a moral impulse. The universe is frightfully cruel. Better refuse absolutely to adjust oneself to it than to make terms with it on any conditions which involve closing the eyes to the cruelty. We have need of care here, however. We have to ask ourselves, when the fury against the universe seizes us, as to how sincere we are. Much of the misery can be relieved. If any of it can be relieved, the deeper sincerity is shown in the attempts at relief than in the railings, though

perhaps the outcries are vents both for him who utters them and for those who hear them.

Nathaniel Shaler used to tell about a boyhood experience of his on a battlefield of the Civil War. The Northern and Southern armies met in battle near young Shaler's home in Kentucky, and the seventeen-year-old boy rushed out to see the spectacle. Coming around a bend of a road he stumbled upon a field hospital and what he saw there made him deathly sick. He was about to swoon when a doctor in the midst of a surgical operation called out, "Here! Take hold"! Shaler did take hold, and soon the faintness passed away. He worked at top speed to the end of the day, with a consciousness of doing something to relieve suffering and with increasing absorption in the task itself. The point is capable of wide application. The woes of the world call forth the loudest outcries from the bystanders. Bystanding is not the closest possible adjustment to the universe.

At the other end of the line are those of our older type who rejoice in the world as having been made by the Almighty with the good of man chiefly in view. Everything is about as it ought to be. That old-time king who declared that if he had been present when the eye was

created, he might have made some valuable suggestions is reckoned as flippant, if not blasphemous.

We do not hear much of this type of thing to-day, and it is well that we do not. We have come closer to our problems. Almost all schools of thinkers now agree that even on the most orthodox theistic basis the universe cannot have been made for man alone. It is easier to believe that there was no plan at all than to hold that stars were set burning millions of years before man appeared on the earth, millions of miles away from the possible site of the earth, with a human purpose principally in view.

Nevertheless, while the universe can with difficulty be believed as created for man alone, that universe can be used by man. Man proceeds to use it for whatever purposes seem to him wise. It would be foolhardy to suppose that the astronomical universe had been spread around us just to give the Newtons and the Einsteins a chance to create appallingly powerful mathematical equations. Still, the responsiveness of the universe to mathematical equations formulated by men does warrant our believing, not that the universe holds man for its sole friend, but that the universe is meas-

urably friendly to man, and responsive to his efforts in the use of the universe.

By the way, man nowhere shows his royalty better than in the free use he makes of the material world. In most pagan views of the world the universe is filled with living spirits which must be kept in good humor. In India this means that snakes and insects must not be disturbed by man, and in China that the demons have to be regarded in the building of roads and houses. The scientific methods of Western civilization, together with that assumption of the primacy of the human values so characteristic of Christianity, have made it possible for us to believe that, whether the material world is made for us or not, we can use it as seems best for human interests. That much of our use has been calamitously wasteful there is no doubt, but of the regality of the assumption by man of the primacy of human values there cannot be doubt either. The world can be used for the living workaday needs. It can be understood in the steps of its natural processes. To a degree it can be communed with in high moments like those possible to the soul of a Wordsworth.

This, then, is a stupendous challenge to which men can respond in an essentially

Christian spirit. They will use the universe for the good of man. They will not be afraid of it. There is not one force in nature of which Christian civilization is afraid in any superstitious sense. The terrors caused by superstition can be driven out altogether. Man can fear an electric current, but not as the rage of a personal spirit. There is nothing that we fear. We can do what we please with nature, within the limits set by the laws of nature itself. Even if we accept a belief in the divine immanence which makes every action of nature the immediate action of God himself, we have no fear of that superstitious kind which for generations kept the mind of man in terror.

A second challenge is for the transformation of the activities of the whole race so as to make the world a more human place of habitation. Suppose we look at the population problem itself. There are too many people in the world for the resources of the world at present available. By the mere size of the total of people now living human life is in many lands held at too cheap a rate. Where there are so many people the value attaching to each unit is small. Malthus used to say that, by the laws of natural increase, the human race grows in numbers up to the limits

set by the physical resources of the earth. Then wars and plagues and infanticide come in to restore the balance.

Let us look at all this a moment. Is there not something at work in the increase of the numbers of the race besides physical, natural forces? In every land where ancestor worship is practiced there is a force making for excessive number of births besides the "natural" forces. Anything that puts a premium upon children increases the birth rate, and some of the factors tending to such increase work in the realm of ideas. Taking the world over to-day, the change of the opinions of masses as to what human life means, and the realization of the obligation to give every human being born into the world a chance at a decent human existence, would enormously cut down the birth rate.

Of the forces which Malthus mentioned as correctives of a too high birth rate one—infanticide is probably now nowhere practiced on a considerable scale. The others—war, famine, and pestilence—can measurably be brought under control. They will have to be controlled if the race is to continue to be human at all in any high meaning of the word. Consider the biological significance of

war. In a war the best go first. The exigencies of war put the best men in the most exposed posts. The volunteers go to war first, and show the highest heroism. That means, as has so often been pointed out, that the survivors in all the warring nations alike are not up to the grade of human excellence of those killed. This means that the human race in war is killing itself at the top. It is estimated that in the World War France lost about six thousand young men who had already given promise in the higher intellectual pursuits. Just how is any nation to make good a loss like that? We have to solve the war question. Understand, the rejection of soldiers as not fit for war service now extends to mental tests. Those not able to show a high enough intelligence quotient are rejected, which means that they are allowed to live on. The failure of the war method as a means of reducing population—apart from its sheer barbarity—is that while it, indeed, kills large numbers, it spoils the quality of the race.

Famine and pestilence are horrible. The trouble with them too as correctives of a birth-rate balance is that they cut into the quality of the race. The weak die off, but many bodies physically weak are the bearers of minds of

giant strength. The mind disappears with the body. No, the regulation of the numbers of the race cannot be left to nature itself.

The problem is not hopeless. Long before we need preach throughout the world the need of artificial restrictive measures we can try to get at the false ideas in the minds of entire races which are back of the demand for five generations of human beings during a period which ought to bring forth only four, as in China, as possibly also in India.

In regarding a problem like that of the population of a race it is easy to say that ideas cannot quickly take hold of the minds of men by the millions. What about the spread of the nationalist spirit in India in the space of less than a generation? Possibly every one of us in this lecture room can recall definitely hearing men say just a few years ago that India could not attain a nationalistic spirit till after the passage of generations. Yet the miracle has in large part been wrought.

All these world-wide problems are closely woven together. Some tell us that if we can raise the standard of living the world over, the population issue will take care of itself, that the poorer ranks of humanity as far as material resources are concerned, breed out

of desperation, or out of callous indifference. Others say that if we could get rid of war, we could get rid of a demand for excessive population. A father of a numerous progeny once justified the size of the family on the ground that the Bible said that the man is happy who has his quiver full of them—that is, of children. The passage quoted is not one of the highest scriptural peaks, for the reference is to using children as arrows to shoot against an enemy.

No matter from what angle we approach the problem we find the challenge to Christianity. The increasing expectation is that Christianity is to attack this world-wide question if it is to be Christianity. The late President Eliot paid the churches the compliment of reproaching them, at the outbreak of the World War, for not having made war impossible, and the late Field Marshal Haig said, after the war was on, that it is the binding duty upon the churches to make war impossible.

I need say only a word as to the challenge of Christianity to make life at least more tolerable for the toiling millions the world over. There are some labor problems which can be approached only on a world-wide scale. Unless we are to continue the ruinous international

policy of high tariffs, the goods produced by so-called cheap labor in backward countries, as far as the human ideals are concerned, will drive out the goods produced under better human conditions. I am referring now more especially to the labor we call unskilled. Labor costs are usually the chief costs; and if labor is poorly paid in countries of big population, goods turned out by such labor can undersell goods produced under more expensive conditions. The nation of higher labor costs may meet the difficulty by the use of machinery, but that forces the unemployment specter upon our attention—or, worse, the fact and not the specter.

All I am trying to say in this discussion of problems which seem to carry us pretty much around the world, is that all forces to-day are throwing the nations of the earth closer together, until they are almost trampling upon one another. This itself puts upon Christianity the duty of developing the spirit in which it is safe for the nations to crowd thus upon one another. If we cannot develop a spirit of moral and spiritual neighborliness, it would have been much better if the nations had remained apart. At the instant when the instruments of communication are forcing na-

tions and people into closer contact it is ominous that the peoples are developing a spirit of nationalism that asks to be let alone.

Dean Roscoe Pound has pointed out that one of the difficulties of American civilization is that our law codes took shape when our life was much simpler and, so to speak, more rural in type. Of recent years we have passed into a state of congestion which creates new social problems altogether. Embarrassment arises from attempting to fit law conceived of in terms of simple community life, or hardly any community life at all, into the increasingly tangled complexities of our present existence.

Similarly, it may be said that an altogether disproportionate amount of our Christian thinking has had to do with the more narrowly personal ranges of Christian living. It might seem at first as if it were hopeless to try to make the personal type of Christianity meet the changed situation of to-day, but the personal view still has the root of the matter —the will to do the will of God, and it is possible for that will to think in larger and longer wholes.

As to the personal life which Christianity sets before men as challenge: that is the aim expressed by Jesus when he told his followers

to be perfect even as the Father in heaven is perfect. This is an impossibility in any literal sense, but the challenge to the impossibility is the glory of Christianity.

The modern methods of religious education are often confusing, and many of the backlying theories are worse than confusing, but one outstanding service religious education has rendered and is rendering, namely, the direction of the thought of the Christian world more thoroughly and scientifically to the type of human material with which we have to deal. We are, out of our modern psychological knowledge, learning the kind of soil on which we have to cast the seed of the truth. On the whole, the view of human nature is more hopeful than ever before. We are more charitable toward some forms of human weakness than formerly, and we have more expectation as to the improvability of human nature than before. One consideration about the present psychological teaching is always to be remembered—the conviction that in dealing with disordered, or distraught, or baffled natures there is always a possibility of giving help. Much of psychoanalysis is depressingly deterministic as far as theory goes, and exhilaratingly optimistic in actual practice.

Take the question of the unity of the self which we must have if we are to think of the life as genuinely Christian. The modern study takes seriously the task of developing such unity. Much of the experience of Christian conversion is, or results in, the attainment of inner unity. There cease to be two or more elements in the self, and one unifying, organizing center comes into power. The private universe of the Christian becomes single-centered and is then able better to impress its own unity on the world without.

The older religious leaders used to speak of something which they called sanctification, or perfectionism. This state was caricatured by the profession of many believers who did not know what the term meant, but the state sought for represented an intelligent Christian aim, namely, to bring all phases of life into subjection to the ruling Christian purpose. Much of the exposition was unfortunate as implying almost a physical uncleanness of human nature, whereas the truth seems to be that the nature chiefly needs subordination and control. Christianity and much modern study are alike in the avowal that nothing in human nature is to be thrown away, or repressed. All parts

are to be controlled by being used to high purpose.

This means that in a profound sense men are to learn to recognize their own powers, not as uncleannesses to be cast out, or wiped out, but as forces to be geared to ideals, so that a recurring temptation means a force not yet set to right tasks. The life goes on through progressive adjustments—adjustments to the universe, to large tasks, to one's neighbors, to one's self. Control becomes the charmed word, not acquiescence in the self-gratification of low impulses, not despairing and frantic attempt to cast out anything, but patient search for the control of impulses all of which can help on toward the fullness of life.

We come back to the individual as the center of the religious life. The social relationships are to be regarded as agencies for the development of individuals. There could, of course, be no society without individuals, but on the other hand the individuals would not amount to much without the play of the social forces upon them. As to the sum total of effects of such forces we hope for the unification and re-enforcement of individual selves.

In an earlier paragraph I said that the

Christian is not to look at material rewards of righteous living but to seek for the fulfillment of the ideals themselves for their own sake. It is not inconsistent with this to remark that the Christian may hope that finally all the material forces may marshal themselves around the Christian ideals, not to reward those who have held them, but to give those ideals a nobler and better setting. The ideals have long been shining through the conditions of poverty: it is high time they had a chance to show what they can do in happier physical conditions. Underneath all this may be also a desire to see the fulfillment of the conviction that the universe itself is friendly to the Christian view. Perhaps Paul meant in a powerful message to teach that the whole material creation is asking for a chance to show what it can do when controlled by the sons of God.

CHAPTER V

THE RELIGIOUS EXPERT

By this title we mean merely the man entitled to respect for the special knowledge of, or seizure of, religious truth and for his ability in the practice of religious principle.

We must recognize at the outset that in the true sense the Christians—we are speaking now primarily of Christian lands—are the religious experts. Expertness, to our modern notion, always implies a degree of trained technical skill, of which I shall speak later; but the lack of technique in this specific meaning is no reason for failing to see that the Christian expert is the one who has attained success—peace in his own life and helpfulness toward others—in the sphere of Christian living. The long life lived in subjugation to, or dependence on, or use of, the Christian ideal, is a good illustration of expertness of the type I have in mind. Life passes through many phases, and these phases must be indeed actually lived through before we can have any knowledge of them. The experience of middle

and old age cannot be understood from the outside.

I knew of a youthful minister who went to call on an old saint, a woman nearly eighty years of age. The minister was, perhaps inevitably, given to the utterance of platitudes about the religious experiences of persons older than himself. He recounted with a youthful poetic spirit, and likewise a youthful lack of tact, that life in old age is like a hillside covered with forest—the leaves all fallen and the branches empty. Whereupon the saintly woman, long experienced in Christian living, remarked calmly that it is possible to see further, and catch more of the outline of a landscape, when the leaves are gone. In all our reflection upon expertness in religious living we have to remember that the living has been done, for the most part, by good men and women who have found their way along, making adjustments as well as possible, without overmuch help from specialized guidance.

That is no reason, however, why there should not to-day be at least attempt at specialized guidance. We need whatever technique may be available for our own development and the development of those whom we may be trying to help. In fact, the closer

we get to the lives of those who impress us as knowing most about Christian living, the more we observe that such persons have rules of one order or another which they are careful to follow with what seems at times foolishly minute exactness. The world smiles a little when it hears that Gandhi will not break his day of silence till the clock strikes the exact hour which marks the end of the silent period, but that same quality of exactness has been discernible in the practice of those in all ages who have given themselves to religious exercises.

There is no reason why a man should not take religious training as seriously as any other phase of training. There is no reason why a leader in religious thinking should not be measurably familiar with the literature in the religious field, and have some leading principles which enable him to find his way about in that field. There are two notions abroad to-day which need to be corrected. One is that in the religious realm all we need is a "good spirit" and a willingness to express ourselves in any way we think best. In an earlier chapter I said that self-expression is well and good, but only if it is taken in hand. Just a spontaneous pouring forth of oneself comes

after a while to be nothing but a series of ejaculations. There is no drifting into any excellence by self-expression that never knows any self-discipline whatsoever. I knew a minister who declared that he got his best sermons as he lay in a hammock, letting his mind wander whither it would. This minister may have been giving himself to that process of incubation of which Graham Wallas makes so much, but I am quite sure that Wallas did not think of such intellectual incubation as best done in a hammock under a tree. Prolonged brooding means strenuous effort, all the more taxing because the mind does not know whither it is being borne, or whether it is likely to come to a stopping place. Newton had his quick flashes following the long brooding spells. The binomial theorem arrived in one of them, but the theorem does not suggest an easy spontaneous self-expression attained to by swinging in a hammock.

If one would be an artist, one must give oneself to a discipline which at times is almost maddening. Take the mastery of a musical instrument—like a piano. The neighbors, at least, will bear witness that the discipline is painful. Self-expression through a piano would, apart from discipline, mean a merely

mechanical pounding of the keys. True self-expression has to recognize that the only way to get the self out in piano playing is almost to make a new set of muscles and nerves by patient practice; and when the self gets out it is more than self.

Percy Gardner a year or two ago protested to Jacob Epstein, the sculptor, that a statue which Epstein submitted for one of London's public buildings was not beautiful. Epstein replied that he was not interested in beauty, but only in his own self-expression. As far as I am aware the correspondence stopped there, but it might have gone further. Epstein might have been told that the world is not especially interested in Epstein's self-expressions except as they reveal some lasting beauty, which, indeed, they do reveal. To get out that something which reveals lasting beauty means building a road through the skilled training of arms and fingers and, indeed, of the whole physical and spiritual organism. If we get nothing at the end but the mere expression of Epstein, or of anyone else, nothing that suggests anything of the eternal for which Epstein may be a channel, we have not gained much.

Religion is in a degree an art. If this is

so, then it ought to call for the volume of practice that success in all art calls for. Let no one think that I mean that religion is a specialty set off by itself, requiring thus about all the hours of the day for its exercise. It is the attempt to bring the whole life under a controlling principle—that of the Christian view of the world. This requires constant practice.

The second mistake about religion is that it requires nothing suggestive of technique because anything will do. A man's religious views are his own affair. There is no training which can be made common to us all which will help us much. This mistake comes mostly, I think, out of a narrow view of religion which prevails to-day, for which religious teachers are themselves responsible to an extent. For nineteen centuries—for a longer period, indeed—we have had before us the command that we are to love God with all there is of us, and our neighbors as ourselves. Religious teaching has persisted in getting almost all the stress on the upward look, and not on the look outward and around. Tear the two commandments apart and we do harm to both, yet that is done. Social students to-day, many of them, refuse to allow any definition of reli-

gion that will make it more than a mystic sort of thrill. In dealing with thrills, of course, we cannot say much, and that leaves us free to get at states of feeling, or themes of inner contemplation, each in his own way.

In India a year ago I found this idea of religion as inner feeling in full swing. Worship of God the Indians knew and service of men they knew, but they could not understand at all the joining of the two together. They did not see what human service had to do with the vision of God. Probably the most widely read writer on social themes in the United States to-day has said in print that the social efforts of Protestantism are a surrender of religious convictions and an acceptance of humanitarianism. A distinguished head of one of the most famous educational institutions in our country did me the honor, a year or two ago, to listen to a statement of mine as to the duty of the churches in human relationship. At the close he was kindly enough in his references to the address, but avowed that in his judgment it had nothing to do with religion at all. Likewise many men in high place in the church have disparaged the practical efforts of the churches themselves as lacking in religion.

There are those of us, nevertheless, who try to follow the view of Jesus—that the two commandments inherently belong together, that the only worship of God that is Christian involves somehow the regard for our fellow men. Everything that thus involves our fellow men has to be carefully thought out. If religion is, indeed, almost wholly concerned with our own inner experiences we may look upon those experiences as peculiarly our own and confine ourselves to them without much regard to anything outside. If, however, we are seeking to guide others, especially in the art of living together in a world like ours, we need at least the largest information and the soundest thinking possible. To this degree, in any event, we need a religious technique. We are fortunate that, in the field of religious education particularly, so much has been done to give us an increasing body of scientific knowledge and method.

I do not myself lay the slightest claim to expertness in the sphere of which I next speak, that of the guidance of individuals to larger and finer knowledge and practice. All I know has come from practical experience without much knowledge of scientific method. There are, though, some principles which do come

out of practical experience of the rule-of-thumb variety which seem to me important as giving a general approach to almost any particular problem.

To begin with, we do well to remember that in the attempt to bring religious help to an individual man we are to deal with a human being who is himself a whole. We cannot well take one part of him by itself and look at that alone. I like to refer to a little book by the late Dr. Francis W. Peabody, of the Harvard Medical School, on the *Care of the Patient.* Doctor Peabody was one of the most brilliant of the younger group of American scientists at the time of his death a few years ago. Just before his death, which he himself knew to be imminent, he wrote this little book, in which he protested that in dealing with a patient the scientific knowledge which can be put down on a chart is not enough. The sick man is a unit. He must be understood as a whole. Such understanding can be arrived at only as the practitioner takes time to get acquainted with the patient, as one would take time to become acquainted with anyone else whom one would like to know. Personal problems and peculiarities which any of us would discuss or reveal only to an intimate

friend may have profound effect in the results of the scientific treatment. Shrewd observers have often told us that one reason for the success of the old-time general practitioner in medicine was due largely to this more intimate knowledge of patients as human beings and individuals. Here also was the secret of the power of much of the old-time pastoral service, in the days when swarms of small duties and activities did not prevent pastors and parishioners from knowing one another. Often in those days a pastor would know many of his parishioners better than those parishioners knew themselves.

Again, it is important that men seeking for help in religious problems be taught to think of themselves and their problems as wholes. One weak point in our educational systems to-day is that they do not give enough place to training men to think thus of a problem as a whole. Analysis is indispensable in mental activity, but it is not everything. Indeed, it may degenerate into almost a morbid habit of picking things to pieces, without ever learning how to put them together again. If we are to do much thinking of ourselves at all—and safe introspection has its well-marked limits—we had better learn to think of all

of ourselves. In that way we may escape too much self-praise for what we think of as excellence, and too much self-blame for what we think of as fault.

Apart from thought about oneself, however, it is religiously important for men to acquire the habit of looking at things in their relation one to another. I like to read detective stories, partly because I just like to, partly because I am sick of most of the love-stuff in novels today, partly because the good detective story is built around the need of looking at a problem as a whole. The detective of the better class of story does not begin by finding a clue or two from which he logically deduces everything. As soon as possible he paints a picture of the case as a whole and then sees whether he can or cannot fit all the facts into the picture. He puts one central figure into the picture after another. Now, woe to him who leaves something essential out of the picture, or who gets the parts of the picture out of right relation to one another! Viewed in this light, a good detective story is a lesson in what the schools so often neglect—the fitting of elements together in the places to which they belong.

Religious thinking is especially prone to

seek for truth in some isolated factor of a problem. The word of Saint Paul that all things work together in the divine plan should never be forgotten. The religious meanings are often found in the togetherness. Religious truth often comes as an orchestral expression. In that marvelous thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians Paul speaks of him who is merely sounding brass and clanging cymbals—the context seeming to imply that this is the man who, without interest in his fellow men, is trying to get along alone, with no more success than usually attends a cymbal solo. The revelation of the divine in the world is seldom in any one feature or factor. It is in the "together" that the truth is to be found. Truth is almost always a composite result. Scientific achievements are seldom the work of any one man. In the individual thinking manifold considerations combine to bring about the final conviction, no one reason alone being compellingly effective.

We hear much to-day about the need of what is sometimes called a Protestant confessional as a relief to some seeking light. We see pretty clearly that the Roman Catholic Church does not need to make claim for miraculous origin and preservation to account

for its survival. Both could be explained by the human quality of the Catholic method. Through long years of traditional handing down of experience in dealing with men, the Catholic priesthood has become expert in instructing souls in the confessional. It is to be doubted, however, if such confessionals are quite what the professional psychologist sometimes takes them to be. There is reason to believe that not all priests are as skillful in the guidance of searching souls as would be desired. Nevertheless, the opportunity is in the confessional and the benefits given are often too manifest to need pointing out. Under the seal of confidence, the mind can talk itself out, if the confessional is anything more than a perfunctory and routine performance. Some confessors evidently have the power of drawing out the minds of their parishioners. The soul content comes out to the place where it can be looked at. Occasionally nothing more is needed for light and relief than just this "talking it out."

Years ago I found myself thrown face to face with a high official of the United States government—then a leader whose name has been spoken scores of times by, I should think, every reader of these lines—who felt that he

had legitimate ground for complaint against an action taken by a Methodist organization. I was the first Methodist official he had met since the action was taken and I received point blank the first discharge of his wrath. As it happened I had not been in the United States at the time the alleged offense was committed, and knew absolutely nothing about it. All I could do was to listen attentively and respectfully. All I could say was an occasional "Yes, sir," or "I understand, sir." I mean that that was literally all I said. At the end of fifteen or twenty minutes the great man arose from his chair with gratification and relief, and with thankfulness for the light I had thrown upon the subject. He did me the favor of attributing to me the well-phrased sentiments he was himself uttering. As far as I know his relief was complete, and he never mentioned the affair again. He was not joking. He was sincere in thinking I had helped him. Probably I helped most in not knowing enough about the incident to say anything.

Incidents like this, however, might be misleading. Much more is needed in a confessional, Roman Catholic or Protestant, than mere listening. The relief in a confessional

probably does not often come through the talking out, but through forgiveness spoken by the priest. The priest's word closes the case. Here, again, however, it is possible for a minister, who lays no claim to priestly authority to forgive, to grant relief and release. Much distress of conscience and of mind often tortures honest persons through their ignorance, especially that resulting from wrong instruction in early years. A scale of perspective as to moral offenses is desirable for some—indeed, for most of us. Social disapproval is so powerful that persons now and again think of themselves as evildoers when they find they have violated a social propriety, and a social blunder causes them the same pain as a truly serious immoral act. Again, there must always be kept in mind the difference between what may be called sins of sense, arising out of human frailty, and the more or less deliberate betrayals of trust. The former may or may not be serious. In any case they can be met by repentance and a changed life. The latter may be dark indeed. Once more there may be sins of a purely personal nature, in which the only confession that need be made is that in prayer to God. There has been confusion here. In the old colonial days the more Puri-

tanic congregations used to insist upon public confession even of merely personal sins where the public had not been involved to any degree whatsoever. It is difficult to read through the record of some of these confessions without feeling that the practice was bad, bad for the one confessing, bad for those who heard. In more than one entry of confession we read that the confession was to the "great satisfaction of the congregation." I was once reproached for not consenting to allow a minister to make a confession of wrongdoing to a Conference of his fellow ministers. In fact, there had been no complaint by anybody about the brother in question. Nobody had any right to fasten any penalty upon him. All that was known was that he had seemed to admit a more or less stupid bit of folly in an affair that did not involve the public in any way whatsoever. One good brother felt, however, that a confession should have been insisted on, "because," he said, "his brothers in the ministry ought to be allowed to share in the joy of forgiving him." Which meant a curiosity of no high order.

As the outcome of religious experience can we have at last the type of person we can call expert? Why not? There are conditions for

the attainment of religious knowledge, and we have been trying to mention some of them. We have all those exercises like prayer and meditation and study which are similar to exercises in the realms of knowledge and of art. Without seeking to lay down rules at all mechanical we may avow our belief that we do not see how a believer can become at all expert in the religious realm without by one means or another keeping himself in constant practice as men do in intellectual and artistic pursuits. We repeat that this does not mean taking on a mass of new duties, but the doing of all things from one viewpoint.

The question is raised quite insistently today as to whether the church is indispensable in the training of men to religious expertness. We are told about such improvement of general moral tone that we cannot say that the conduct of people outside the church is on the whole less upright than of those inside. So far as conduct is concerned, the level everywhere has risen, both inside and outside of the church, which is a consideration for gratification. The question is not wholly answered, however, by dealing with the problem of observable conduct. It has somewhat to do with the growth of those inner states of which

we have all along been speaking. Moreover, while we cannot answer a further question, we may be permitted to ask it, namely, whether the general progress of men in conduct does not in some measure depend upon the presence of institutions which seek purposely to develop right conduct. It is possible that some persons live on a high place of conduct who never go near churches, but whose lives are shaped by the subtle moral forces in a community which are aided by the church.

Without averring that all experts in religious life must draw their nourishment from the churches, we do say that it is difficult to see how expertness in any line can be developed without institutional help. An institution is merely an agency for the creation of a community of persons of like-minded interests and purposes. A university is essentially a community of persons seeking knowledge. There is such a possibility as that of absorbing knowledge from an educational institution apart from the direct instruction of classroom. We say that in university centers intellectual quickening is in the air.

I think it can be maintained that the churches to-day are doing their part at the

creation of their own type of community life as well as are other institutions. It will not do to pick out any one outstanding church for purposes of comparison any more than it will do to pick out any one superlatively good university; but, taking a view of all schools and of all churches, and making allowance for the less adequate resources available for churches, the churches are at least comparatively well performing their functions as trainers of men in religious discernment.

We now and again get things out of plumb in consideration of this problem by thinking of churches as merely the individuals who compose them. A church which is entitled in any manner to be called an organism is more than this or that individual meeting in a religious building with this or that other individual. It would be easy to stand over against any church door and comment critically and even cynically upon the individuals entering for worship. Our comments, however, would be far from embracing the whole truth. Individuals serving the church come to have the power of individuals in any other organic group—that of revealing powers which do not appear when the individuals are taken separately. The situation here is

like that in congregational singing. A congregation made up of persons at whose singing we should smile if we listened to them one at a time, may sing majestically when they are singing together. Something about the singing together cancels out, or covers up, peculiarities which we should notice if we heard the singers separately, and draws out excellences unsuspected as long as the individuals are outside of a mighty chorus. Likewise, a church has, or can have, this collective power for those seeking to enter into the deeper things of the spirit, at least by supplying impulse and inspiration toward those deeper insights.

Again, it is not only by what one gets but by what one gives that a church helps toward the noble discernments. It is by the attempt to help a church up to a better understanding that many a leader becomes more a master of his own ideas. Our ideas are never so much our own as after we have succeeded in stating them effectively to others. It is doubtful if a thinker has learned all there is to know about the truth which he thinks is his until he has tried to teach it.

When the religious expert is finally developed, he has the same marks as those of ex-

perts in other realms. There is a veritable weight of authority about what he says. Those who believe in an expert in any field expect him to deliver judgment without always assigning reasons. Perhaps his assigning reasons is impossible. I have seen a medical expert stand by the bedside of a patient and pass upon what the sick man's condition was, and what to do with him, without a word of explanation. The other physicians accepted the statement at once without an instant's hesitation. I once knew a famous diagnostician to travel a long distance and utter just one word as he looked upon a sufferer. In response to a doctor's question as to whether it was a particular disease he uttered the one word, "Yes." That was all.

What these incidents mean is, not that such experts are lucky guessers, but that they have so practiced their knowledge into their entire natures that in the presence of a problem they can count upon a revealing reaction of their whole minds. The discernment is not the act of any one faculty.

Now, religious expertness is not quite of this scientific type, but it is akin to it. The religious expert attains to an awareness of some factors in life that the untrained reli-

gious mind may miss altogether. Just as a fine sense of propriety may be the highest flower of moral insight so this perception of higher values by a religious expert may be the surest indication of his expertness. Asked as to whether he would approve a given moral course or not, he may reflect for a moment and then reply "Yes" or "No" without being able to give reasons for his answer.

These subtler powers often rest down upon the foundation of many years' performance of lowly and stern tasks. The sound moral judgments of masses of men are often due to their faithfulness in life-long discharge of prosaic moral obligations. There is thus built, or laid, a foundation on which the moral needles can rest unshaken when they seek for the pole of some delicate moral insight. A life-long experience in daily honesty makes honesty so much of the life that in a supreme test the life points true without being able to assign reasons.

We need always to keep in mind that the religious expert may be wise in practical concerns, even though he may seem to live in an exalted moral sphere. It is an axiom in religious thinking that the mind that has never known serious transgression may be the one

best fitted to deal with the problems raised by transgression. There is something about transgression—at least sinning against the light—which seems to damage the keener powers of the mind. So that the man who knows least about evil in his own experience may be best fitted to deal with the situation created by evil. It is a mistake to think that he is best qualified to help sinners who has himself been a sinner. This is not true if the sin has been any serious breach of higher laws, for these laws seem to withdraw themselves from the understanding of those who sin against them. Some years ago, Dr. R. C. Moberly, in his profound book, *Atonement and Personality,* took the ground that the man who has never himself sinned is the one who can feel most deeply the ravages wrought by sin. This caused an outcry from some who did not understand at all, and from some who declared that the man who feels forgiveness for sin is the one who best understands the meaning of sin. Doctor Moberly meant that sin, even if forgiven, involves a dulling of moral perception that may affect a man's judgment of the finer points to be observed in the ordinary human contacts. There may be a wisdom, deeper than we have fathomed, in Paul's word that

the saints shall judge the world. It may be too that the modern methods in religious education which aim to get children started aright, in moral as in other activities, are acting with a sound instinct for the cultivation and preservation of powers highly important for society as a whole.

It remains to say a word about the religious expert in his attitude toward the larger social questions. Industrial and other social potentates often cry out against churchmen who speak forth about the evils wrought in society by inhuman processes, to the effect that churchmen do not know enough about such matters to form judgment on them.

Let us keep here to our standards as to human values It is perfectly true that a modern religious prophet may not know much about the technical side of an industry. That is not relevant, however. The essential question is as to whether he knows anything about the human side of an industry. If the pastor in an industrial center does not know anything about the human effects of the industries in that center, he is missing his opportunities and his duties. It used to be said in foreign mission fields, in the period when Western exploiters did not care to be interfered with,

that the missionaries were not competent to pass on international economic policies. That would not likely be said to-day. By pretty general consent it is agreed that in Africa, to glance at a single example, the missionaries have been closer to the effects of forced labor than any other group except the laborers themselves. How could it be otherwise? If the missionary is worth his salt, he knows the life of his people more intimately than any other foreigner can know them.

Twenty-five years ago a certain industry in this country was notorious for the number of harrowing accidents each year in its mills. In all fairness be it noted that that same industry is now freer from accidents, through the progressive extension of safety devices, than perhaps any other large scale organization in the land. Twenty-five years ago, though—and for many years before that—socially-minded ministers were protesting against the loss of life and limb in the mills, only to be told by the operators that they did not know what they were talking about, and that they had better mind their own ecclesiastical business. Well, it was the ecclesiastical business of these ministers to bury the dead, and if the dead man had been killed in a mill they knew it. It was their

business to visit the sick and injured. They would have been dull indeed if they had not found out what was wrong with the injured one when they called. The ministers, naturally enough, talked the calamities over with one another and knew the dreadful totals of injuries. In all this they were minding their ecclesiastical business.

Any servant of the church who takes it on himself to do so can soon learn more about the labor conditions in a modern mill than can the head of the factory himself. When such a head man announces that he knows labor problems because he was once a laborer himself and that he came up from the ranks, we may be sure that the situation is about hopeless as far as that employer is concerned. For when such an employer was a laborer, he had a climbing power which the ordinary laborer does not have and cannot have. The man who has climbed up has nothing in his experience to enable him to understand the laborer who cannot climb, the laborer suffering hopelessly from physical, or mental, or racial, or temperamental handicaps. Any one who mingles among those at the foot of the ladder understands the labor problem better than the man at the top, and it is the business of the min-

ister to mingle among the men at the foot of the ladder. The view at the foot of the ladder as one looks hopelessly up is a bit different from that at the top of the ladder as one looks triumphantly down.

Just what practical measures the servant of the church may take to call the attention of public opinion to whatever real grievances the men have who are at the foot of the ladder, is a matter for his own judgment. If he is expert enough to see far into the tangled complexities of an intricate problem, there is gain all around, but no amount of detailed knowledge is as important as to see sharply and straight the human essentials involved in any modern industrial, or racial or militaristic movement which threatens the welfare of men. The highest expertness is that of a mind that can see problems steadily and see them whole. The power of a Christian view of men to conduce to such steadiness and wholeness is an indication of the soundness of the view. The present-hour apologetic for Christianity is the fact that the Christian view helps us to see the present conditions of men, and points ahead to the change of conditions which the view itself calls for.

CHAPTER VI

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

THE questions most frequently asked during the lectures had to do with the right of the church to seek to bring about a changed order of society by law, especially when the law has to be enforced against a large minority. Granting that it is a function of the church to create a social atmosphere in which the observance of the Christian ideal is possible and practicable, why does not the church stick more closely to a spiritual method like education?

Of course it is obvious that this question is aimed chiefly at Prohibition. It is impossible to lecture on any phase of a Christian social order to-day without having this question raised at the earliest opportunity. After addresses in which I have said nothing directly bearing on the liquor business, this query as to Prohibition has always been among the first propounded.

There are quite a few assumptions implied in the question as usually asked. First, that Prohibition was put upon the United States

of America against the will of the people. There is no use wasting time with this. Anyone whose memory goes back fifteen years knows that the anti-liquor vote was decisive, and was at the time accepted as such. I talked with enough liquor men at the time to recall that their only protest was against what they called "confiscation"—taking property from the liquor men without financial compensation. There was no protest at the time against anything being "put over" on the people. Indeed, there were among the liquor groups some who saw what was coming and made adjustments to get into some other business before the final Prohibition steps were taken. It is, of course, possible to argue that the people of the country have changed their minds as to Prohibition, but it is not possible to make out a case for the nation's being taken by surprise. At the time the Prohibition law went into effect nobody thought that the church had done anything but favor a law in which it saw the crowning of a perfectly normal process of education and persuasion.

Since the anti-Prohibition movement has gained power, it has also been assumed in some quarters that the church helped the Prohibition movement by lobbying, and that it has

prevented repeal efforts by lobbying. I do not believe that the charge of lobbying can be successfully lodged against the church, as such. I am willing to admit that individual members of churches may have acted as lobbyists, but not churches. I do not think lobbying is permissible for churches. An individual lobbying transaction may be innocent, but the system has its dangers, the chief being that in such transactions there is an implied agreement that the favor of voting for a good measure may be met by a request in turn for a vote for a measure not so good. It is not possible to make the atmosphere which will aid Christian belief by lobbying, or by threats or cajolery. The church has a right to state its position, out in the open, with all reasons in full view, and all processes admitted and avowed.

In the broad meaning the church does attempt to bring about social change by education and persuasion. Every appeal to the public aims to educate and persuade. We do well to heed the demand for adult education to-day. When the advocates of the liquor traffic talk of education, what they admittedly have in mind is instruction in the public schools. That would leave them free to go ahead with "business as usual" as in the old days. If no liquor

were to be sold until fifteen or twenty years from now, there might be some reason in the plea to educate the youth against the liquor traffic and let them decide it. Not so if the business is to start up at once.

If the church insists that the Prohibition law is law until it is actually repealed, it is acting realistically in face of a condition. There are financial and other forces back of a movement like the liquor traffic. In the presence of those forces the church has a right to urge, through open statement, the restraint of the forces. The old adage that when the church is advocating a Prohibition law, it is trying to make men good by force, is irrelevant. The church is trying to get the public to refuse to allow the sale of liquor. With everything out in the open the church is trying to educate the adult minds, the voters, to register a judgment against the traffic. Such education, to be Christian, must stick to facts, appeal to reason, and seek for the highest human values.

It is easy, when we are dealing with questions like this, to forget that we cannot wipe slates clean and make brand-new starts. If there were possible a condition in which the educational processes in the schools and the

liquor forces could start even, a good deal might be said in favor of agreeing to let saloons see what they could do after a generation had been trained to scientific knowledge of the effects of alcoholic beverages. We cannot concede, however, that letting the traffic go ahead full blast and have its way while the education of the youth requires a period of years, is fair. Organized traffics find ways to entrench themselves. The newspapers of a land are agents of adult education, and the newspapers to-day are making a sorry spectacle of themselves in subserviency to liquor interests. The only way the church can meet a situation like this is through its own statement to the public by pulpit and its own press.

It is interesting to note the contradiction into which the assailants of the church often fall in the discussion of social questions. There are two courses open to-day to popularity in some circles professedly devoted to social progress. One is to deny that the church has any power to-day—insisting that it is a defunct institution—dead beyond hope of recovery. To be sure, it never seems to occur to some of these socially alert intelligences that it is highly suspicious when we have to announce too often that the church is dead. It

may be alive enough to make necessary these frequent announcements of its death.

Now, no sooner do many of these minds get through telling us that the church is dead than they announce to us that the church is trying to run everything in the nation. The peril to the state is imminent, it appears.

Prohibition is not a part of a divine revelation, like an inspired scripture. It is a device by which millions of people are trying to deal with a grave social evil, an evil which contradicts about everything the church, in particular, stands for. The judgment of the people is not that the method is sacred in itself. The nation has tried almost every other method under the sun and is trying Prohibition because there is no better method in sight. What the churches are doing is to present facts to the public, showing the incompatibility of the liquor traffic with the formation of that social atmosphere which gives the larger and finer human values their chance. The presentation of the facts to the public is at once education and persuasion, all moving according to constitutional process.

Why has Christianity so often failed in the presence of great social opportunities?

The common answer is that it has never been tried, but that is not satisfactory. It leaves us wondering why it has not been tried. In many aspects we have to think of Christianity as an experiment. What are the conditions under which experiments in any realm succeed?

We observe that a scientist, in trying to get hold of some chemical or physical force for wide general use, works first to capture the force, or to discover the law, under what he calls "controlled" conditions. If the law is to reveal itself in the movement of a delicate instrument, the instrument is placed on a part of the laboratory foundation which reaches much farther down into the earth than does the rest of the foundation, so that there may be as little disturbance as possible from surface tremors. Once having discovered the law, the scientist can then make allowances for the disturbances, but he may not be able to get hold of the law in the first place unless the conditions are controlled as I have indicated.

Likewise in the field of social experiment. One argument for the preservation of the separate state organizations in a nation like ours, is that such small social units may supply the conditions for a controlled experiment in a

social enterprise before the enterprise is undertaken on a wide national scale. John Dewey once said that the aim of a public school should be to create in miniature an ideal society, the hope being that out of these controlled conditions lessons may be learned by the pupils which can be afterward used in the larger social community.

Part of the duty of a church is to create the controlled conditions in which social principles can be seized and stated and illustrated for the community at large. A church is supposed to be a blessed community set in the midst of a world not so blessed, and to proclaim its blessedness by its conduct and spirit. In every denomination to-day, presumably, the demand is made that in all social contacts—industrial, racial, international, personal—the church shall try to set out principles in harmony with the teachings of Jesus. Thus the church is to be conceived of as a laboratory for controlled social experiment. In its treatment of labor, of differences of race and of nations the church should be far, far in advance of the ordinary practice of society.

This elementary principle of the control of conditions for experiment has been largely overlooked. Critics of Christianity who are

especially fierce on churches expect Christian principles to get a start without such experiment. They might just as well cry out against experiments in laboratories. One of the splendid triumphs of our day is the popular seizure of so much of scientific spirit and the widespread reliance on scientific method. It would not be wise, however, to assume that this scientific temper gets abroad merely by its own expansiveness. It would soon cease to expand if myriads of experiments were not constantly being carried forward. The critics of Christianity and also its friends would do well to ponder often upon the function of the church as a spiritual laboratory. When we are thinking of experiment, we must remember that much experiment is failure, but that one genuine success will more than compensate for many failures. Christianity will succeed in the largest degree only as the church has a chance to act as a laboratory for spiritual experiment. In this it is essentially not different from science.

How can the Christian promote world peace?

The conscientious objector is usually the

first to answer. He will never aid or abet war on any account. He will not enlist himself in time of war, and he will do all he can to keep others from enlisting. In all of this he feels sure that he is doing what Jesus would do.

Starting with the last claim first, that the conscientious objector has more than any others the mind of Christ, we may be ourselves permitted to raise a query. There is nothing that Jesus said directly about military service. In general, we get little light on social problems by asking what Jesus would do. Take the problem of the present capitalistic organization of society. The assailants of capitalism as such reproach the church for not having the attitude of Jesus on capitalism. By the testimony of Socialists themselves capitalism as we know it is not more than one hundred and fifty years old. It depends upon large-scale enterprise of which the ancients knew nothing, and upon the loaning of money for interest in a manner and degree of which the ancients knew little. Jesus did speak against greed and covetousness, but his words are as applicable to Socialism as to capitalism. So that all we can say about what Jesus would do in a capitalistic era is that Jesus would

do whatever we ought to do. What we ought to do we shall have to find out for ourselves. So with enlistment in time of war. It is altogether too easy a solution to say that we will not enlist for war because Jesus would not if he were here.

Nor does the conscientious objector help us much when he tells us that the Christian aim should be to preserve a Christian conscience utterly free from all trace of compromise. Conscience has no way of settling social issues except by taking consequences into account. The final test is the effect on human welfare—does a given course make for the largest and finest human life? It does not quite answer this question to have the objector reply that the main aim ought to be to keep one's conscience unsullied. There are other people so deeply concerned about the welfare of their fellows that they lose sight of what happens to themselves—conscience and all. If they think killing or dying on a battlefield will help their fellows, they do not think of their own consciences. They are so anxious about the salvation of others that they do not stop to ask whether they themselves are saved or not. They do not regard the approval of conscience as a spiritual luxury to be held fast

to. They take the consequences of their belief. Likewise, the conscientious objector must take the consequences of his belief, as did Roger Baldwin in accepting a prison sentence for his attitude toward the World War. The absolutist objector must expect the furies of an adverse public sentiment to be turned loose against him. Moreover, if he is sent to jail, he must not be too forgiving to tell, when he gets out, just what was done to him in jail, where it was done, and who did it. For, whether the conscientious objector is willing to admit it or not, he is serving by dramatizing before public opinion the effects of a war-crazed public sentiment. The story is told that at the outbreak of the World War an Austrian soldier, a devout Christian, refused to fall in to go to the battle-front. He was asked if he knew what that meant. He replied that he did, and a few hours later fell dead before a firing squad. There is something involved here beyond the mere satisfying of one's own conscience, namely, the dramatic setting of a principle before public opinion. The manifest heroism of the conscientious objectors is the spear-head to-day in the fight against war, their bravery being of that extraordinary type that knows nothing of arti-

ficial excitement produced by the uproar of battle itself. I bow more profoundly to the conscientious objectors than to any other heroes of the war. Oh, don't cease to be gentle, gentle reader, at this! I mean the conscientious objectors who took and take the consequences. Not the writers, myself included, who have written and continue to write, without any especial risk.

Still, we who thus write do play our part, though it involves no great hardship. It is our task to help persuade the public to see war in its true perspective. To do this we are not saying that no good has ever come from war, or that soldiers are brutes, or that a man would not be justified in killing in self-defense or in defense of his wife and children. We are thinking of the very practical problem of how to set public opinion against wars between nations. We are not bothering our heads about such irrelevances as police power exerted against crooks. We are trying to show the absurdity of hurling the masses of the population of a measurably peace-loving country against the masses of another measurably peace-loving country.

As Christians we can do all possible to get the churches not to bless war. If any reader

thinks that official pronouncements against war, like those of a Methodist General Conference, have no effect, he ought to have a chance, as I have, to hear what militarists say about such pronouncements. They say, chiefly, that the pronouncements are futile, which means that they are not futile. When an utterance is futile, we pay no attention to it. There is nothing that militarists dread more than church pronouncements against war. For they know that wars have to be undertaken by the mass of a nation's population in a temper of devotion to a cause which seems to them holy. The masses will not fight for economic issues, or merely to advance nationalistic schemes, unless they feel something beyond this. Nations are not wicked with a raw selfishness. They must be persuaded that the cause is a good cause before they will fight for it. They would never surrender to dictators in wartime if they did not believe noble issues to be at stake. To be sure, they go to mad lengths in delivering themselves up to leaders. The people of the United States put four million men into military camps in 1917 and sent two millions of them overseas, without the men thus sent having any direct vote on the matter. I think there

are some causes for which I might be willing to be killed, but before going forth to be killed, or to kill, I should like the privilege of making a few remarks. No remarks are possible after the fighting begins.

A good deal is being said to-day about religion as worship. What do you think of this emphasis on worship?

The Federal Council of Churches has apparently so felt the need of the spiritual benefits following the development of a worshipful mood that it has appointed a commission to urge upon all the Protestant churches the importance of so reorganizing the church service as to give the idea of worship its rightful place. As a church service is of little avail apart from the mood of the individual attendant, it is well to think for a little of what the worshipful mood is.

This question is all the more important from the fact that all sorts of believers and nonbelievers are talking of worship. Some months ago I happened to be talking with a professor in a leading university about the church. This man was protesting against the social activities of churches and against the

preaching from the pulpits. As far as I could make out he did not believe in anything—anything that could be put into words. He uttered a shocked outcry, however, when I asked if he wished the churches abolished. "By no means," he replied. "We must keep them for worship." I keep thinking, "I know what this man meant;" and then, again, I am not so sure.

I think of another acquaintance who could get nothing out of Bible reading, or devotional exercises, with one exception. He was an expert musician and found his religious outlet in playing on a church organ, one production especially being a favorite with him, the *Pilgrim's Chorus*. He avowed that absorption in such music was to him worship. Still another acquaintance, a man of thorough sincerity, tells me that the contemplation of stained glass in cathedrals fills him with religious devoutness.

Far be it from me to disparage in the least the thrill which comes from the contemplation of the beautiful. Did not Paul say that we are to adorn the doctrine of the Lord Jesus, making that doctrine as beautiful as is possible? A religion without beauty would be most questionable. Yet the heart of Christianity is

moral purpose, based on the revelation of a moral God. Anything that puts men into a reverent mood is good, but it is difficult to see how the contemplation of stained glass as such can be a final goal in Christian worship. Whatever makes it easier for us to believe in the God of Christ is clear gain. We must not deceive ourselves, however, into thinking that all thrills are Christian thrills. Any beauty is indeed worth while on its own account, but it must not be called religious, or Christian, when it does not reach out beyond the æsthetic.

What I am now saying will be very annoying to some honest worshipers of the beautiful. Is not God the source of all Beauty? When we worship beauty, do we not worship God? Of course we do, but we may not always thus worship the God of Christianity. A man might be in raptures over a bit of stained glass and at the same instant feel contempt for his fellow men. He might be so ecstatic over music as to miss all human significances. We are told that the rich man in the parable was clothed in purple and fine linen—objects of beauty, be it noted. Some of the rich men in the day of Jesus were experts in judging beauty. The beauty of the home and clothing

of the rich man of the parable may have indicated that he would hold Lazarus in contempt—for æsthetically speaking, Lazarus was not an object of beauty. Yet Lazarus was an end-in-himself, in value beyond the worth of any work of art. The rich man was not a bad man on any showing. His fault was that he missed the worth of Lazarus. To be sure, one of the marks of the greatness of man is his ability to appreciate beauty, but in the Christian system the chief beauty is moral in the wide meaning of the term—and the recognition of moral values stated in human terms is the central aim of Christian worship as such.

Has the modern "youth movement" left any lasting consequences?

The so-called modern movement has made a considerable contribution to our thinking about home duties. I remember talking to a distinguished social student in Germany at a time when the youth movement in that country was at its height, and the object of much disfavor because of the immoralities alleged against it. This student—a member of an evangelical church, by the way—told me that,

admitting a license in some quarters which had led to dissoluteness, there had resulted nevertheless much good from the movement in that it had brought about a fresh emphasis on the duty of parents toward children. When the movement started it was a revolt. The youngsters, with altogether ostentatious defiance, announced that they were not themselves responsible for being in this world; that being here without their own consent, they were going to do something other than fight and die in wars made by their elders; that, in a word, they were going to follow their own sweet wills, no matter if the outcome might prove anything but sweet.

Put thus the utterances of the youth were shocking enough until the elders themselves began to see the degree of justification in the youthful defiance. All such revolt movements have in them something of reaction. For generations parents had laid stress on the obligations of children, making the family duties virtually one-sided—I mean, in the eyes of the children. I suppose any one of us can call to mind homes in which the children were not especially welcome, and yet in which obligation and obedience were preached calculated to give the idea that the children had received

a great boon in being brought into the world by parents to whom an everlasting obligation was due. This was re-enforced by all manner of legal enactments—natural enough when we remember that the grown-ups always made the enactments.

The old hackneyed expression is in order; the truth is in between the extremes. It was well that the emphasis be divided between the obligations of parents and those of children. Just at present perhaps it is best to make the most of the movement coming from the youth, and preach the obligations of parents. There is no obligation to compare with that of parenthood, which is, in effect, but little short of the power to create human souls outright. We have heard the old-time expression about the power of life and death over men. The power of death is awful to contemplate, but what about the power of life, or of bringing to life?

In general, this responsibility is widely accepted, and we can be glad that it is so. States as a whole recognize the obligation to the rising generation more than we think, as do the smaller communities, for example, in the support of public-school systems. A few years ago, when American supplies were sent to a

Russian village starving in time of famine, it was discovered that not enough wheat had come to go around. Whereupon the village authorities decided that whosoever else suffered, the children had to be fed. I think this fairly well represents the attitude any modern community would take. Nevertheless, while this is true of the general social viewpoint, there is as yet altogether too little recognition in homes of the obligations involved in parenthood. The first problem of the modern home is to get this obligation definitely assumed. It is an obligation in regard to which a Christian has no choice. It is primary and inescapable so far as the sanction of moral law is concerned.

Please discuss the cause, or causes, of the lack of religious faith among young people to-day.

I do not know that this lack of faith is peculiarly a problem of young people. The young people may speak more openly, but their alleged lack of faith is not any more a problem than that of their elders.

In thinking of this question we have to start with the World War. I do not say that the

war is the explanation, but we have to start there. In those easy-going days before the world-catastrophe broke upon us we made, not intentionally but as a matter of course nevertheless, the assumption that Christendom was Christian, or measurably so. Christendom got into the war without much thought about war as atheistic and anti-Christian. It was easy to march off to the battlefield with the notion that the war was a Christian enterprise. We are far astray when we think of the churches as blessing war in a spirit of hypocrisy. It was all done in complete sincerity. In spite of all our peace societies there were only small minorities in any of the warring countries who had ever reflected seriously upon the unchristian nature of war, or upon war at all.

It was not long, however, before the real nature of war began to manifest itself. There was no glory in it, except in the motives of those who fought. The fighters themselves soon saw the glamour disappear. To be pulled into war by draft, without having a word to say as to whether one wished to fight or not, was an experience in itself calculated to upset one's views about almost everything. I worked among soldiers myself long enough to see that

about the emptiest theme one could talk about to them was religion. The chaplains were blamed for devoting themselves wholly to minor forms of humanitarian service as distinct from anything religious, but the blame was not just. That was about all a chaplain could conscientiously do. The contradiction between Christianity and war was too obvious. I personally do not think we can blame the four million drafted men for lack of faith. Comparatively few of them did utterly lose faith, which is a marvel of the first order.

So much for those on whom the burden of war fell most directly. They are a small part of the total. The war shook everything to its foundations—state organizations, industrial and educational life, the family as an institution, and, of course, religion and religious forms. In this upheaval and ferment one question kept coming to the fore, namely, what is the use of anything? Too often the answer was "Nothing."

For the specific doubts as to the existence of God the church has been largely to blame. We have made too easy assumptions about God. We have been busy with practical tasks —and have been afraid to say much about back-lying religious views. The result has

been that this generation thinks there is not much back there. We have been so kindly and charitable regarding atheistic and agnostic ideas that the magazine- and novel- and popular philosophy-readers have mistaken our charity toward holders of superficial ideas for charity to the ideas themselves, and have concluded that atheism and agnosticism logically have the best of it. To reply to a slashing atheistic attack on the foundations of theism with an equally slashing attack on the foundations of atheism is to-day hardly regarded as sportsmanlike. So that multitudes of readers think that the idea of God as maker of heaven and earth and of mankind is to-day just too funny to talk about. They fail to see that the idea of atoms, even conceived of as systems of electrons is funnier still, judged by any tests of adequacy to the creative task. Science is portrayed as a fair goddess and philosophy as a bedraggled drab; but the garments of science are as full of holes as are those of philosophy, and, man for man, scientific thinkers are as biased and intolerant and as ignorant outside of their own specialties as are the philosophers—with notable exceptions in both camps.

All of which seems to make a bad situation

worse, but which really means that the issues of religious thinking are settled outside of the strictly intellectual. The first discovery we need to make is that in all world-views—scientific, philosophic, and theological—we rest down upon assumptions, and that assumptions come as a resultant of the total of forces playing on us. The primary assumption is as to what is to be taken as most worth while. The era through which we are passing has had a sort of disease which has shown itself in avowing that nothing is worth while. It may be well for us here to recall the forceful though not overelegant remark of a distinguished observer of human affairs that sick minds like sick stomachs can keep nothing down. I heard a teacher of philosophy say a little while ago that we choose among differing views of the world as we would choose whether we desired flesh or fish or fowl for dinner. I do not mean to take the theme quite so flippantly as that, though that is about what a good many professed thinkers are doing. If we are frivolous in our attitude toward world-views, we shall hardly attain to theism, or to any atheism, for that matter, worth talking about.

We can get an angle on the need of making assumptions in religious belief if we look for

an instant at a problem which it is hardly permissible to talk about at all to-day in some professedly scientific circles, namely, immortality. Now, admittedly there is no convincing proof to-day that human lives survive death. Suppose, then, we look at the alternative. Just for the sake of the argument let us assume that there is no basic meaning in immortality, except that beautiful nonsense about living on in other lives made better by the fact that we have lived on earth. I say "beautiful" sincerely, for there is beauty in the conception, and "nonsense" sincerely, because it is nonsense to speak of such a conception as describing immortality.

Almost any respectable thinker will speak respectfully of the good, the true, and the beautiful. If, now, such a thinker denies immortality, let him tell us in what these values consist. If there is no enduring spirit in man, there is no reason to conclude that there is an immortal spirit anywhere in the universe. We will not now purposely tread the path toward idealism, but we do ask for whom the eternally good and true and beautiful exist? The only answer can be that they exist for the minds that perceive them. Those minds came into existence at a given date and at a given date

will presumably all be out of existence. The generations succeed one another in a procession that gazes out upon the universe for a moment and then passes on. When the procession ceases, the truth and the goodness and beauty are no longer seen. It has been a favorite pleasantry in some quarters for at least fifty years to smile at the absurdity of a universe in which human beings would live forever. The idea of millions, even billions, of men living on and on seems to some enemies of the belief in immortality about the last word in absurdity. Perhaps it is; but if so, the absurdity begins long before we attain to immortality. The fact is that human beings are now here, including the disbelievers in immortality—and, if we are looking for cosmic jokes, perhaps there is something funny in men's being here at all. It all depends on the point of view.

Again there are some who will have it that the desire for immortality is both egotistic and selfish. Just where the egotism is in putting spiritual things above material does not readily appear; and as for selfishness, suppose the desire for immortality arises from a desire for unselfish service. Of course we can say that the desire for unselfish service is itself

selfish—but all that means is that it is grammatically and rhetorically possible to say anything.

We have to admit that if there is no God of the nature revealed in the New Testament, there is no ground for belief that immortality would be worth while. An eternal life of pain, or of boredom, would not be much of a boon. All depends on the way we look at the problem of God. We cannot make anything of immortality without God, and we cannot make much of God without immortality. We can talk of "eternal values" without God in the universe, by which we can mean values belonging to a timeless realm, valuable forever on their own account, without regard to mere existence in time, but such talk goes stale after a while. Eternal values that are not of enough account to count for anything, save in the minds of a comparatively few intelligences that themselves soon cease to be, are not especially inspiring. The old question "What is the use?" comes back upon us, and is at bottom the only pertinent question.

Summing up, we need more stress to-day on as hard thinking as is possible to us—thinking partly for the sake of recognizing the limitations of intellectual processes them-

selves. Intellectual power never attains its highest reach until it recognizes its own limitations. One advantage of going through college is in the relief from a wrong sort of timidity, a form of inferiority complex in the presence of the professedly learned, and in a properly placed respect for genuine intellectual worth. A cynic once said that the aim of education is to enable one to put up a good bluff—to which a nimbler wit replied, "and to call one when it is put up." The expression is not overrefined, but one function of intelligence to-day is to call the bluffs put up in the name of professedly superior intelligence.

As for the rest, the way out of doubt is the subjection of oneself to, or the immersion in, the life-currents which make for faith. Any force which will tone up the higher life to-day will help us. Much good is coming out of the present upheaval for the church itself. There are some doctrines, and some ways of establishing doctrines, of which we are not likely to hear so much in the days just ahead. It is to be noted already that the church is getting a chastened emphasis on conduct. We are not hearing as much as we did that any good conduct, coming out of a "good spirit" will do, and more about right ethical attitudes as

the key to religious knowledge. Much of the criticism against the church is to the vast credit of the church. It ought not to expect much praise in a world like ours. Some of the criticism is high praise.

There is no easy way to faith. It may be just as well to realize that faith in these days has to be earned at hard effort. It calls for the heroic mood and the heroic will.

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